ENTERTAINMENT / E1

Fil-Am 'shocked' by elimination from 'American Idol'

NEWS / A2

4 firms raise gas, diesel, kerosene prices by 50¢ a liter

INFOTECH / B2-2

Hot items: 3G music phone, sports look of Blackberry

NEWS / A7

Kris Aquino bids temporary goodbye to TV, intrigues

Business groups to host March 14 poll debate at the Manila Hotel

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PROPOSED DEBATE BETWEEN OPposition and administration senatorial candidates to be hosted by business groups on March 14 at the Manila Hotel will push through despite the refusal of the Genuine Opposition to participate unless it is held at Plaza Miranda and not in an "elitist" venue.

"Some of them (GO) candidates have already informed us that they will attend," said Francis Chua, president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc.

Chua said the business groups were eager to sponsor the debate because they wanted to get a peek at the stand of the candidates on key issues, particularly those affecting the economy.

The GO candidates had earlier accepted the business groups' invitation but begged off over the weekend because they preferred to hold the debate at Plaza Miranda which was more accessible to the masses

BUSINESS/ A22

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, March 5, 2007 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 87 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Little tykes, big dreams

By TJ Burgonio

PAGKAKATAON NYO NANG MADISKUBRE AKO!

A LONG LINE OF CARS slowly crawled on the road leading to the Television and Production Exponents Inc. (TAPE) office on Xavierville Avenue in Quezon City that Saturday.

Outside the office, a huge crowd of women and

LITTLE/ A4

99 special courts to try extrajudicial killings

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS DESIGNATed 99 regional trial courts as special tribunals with orders to resolve cases of extrajudicial killings in 90 days and a warning that any delays would be punished.

"The speedy and expeditious resolution of these criminal cases deserves the highest concern by the judiciary, involving, as they do, the most brazen violations of human rights," the high court said in Administrative Order 25-2007.

The order was signed by Chief Justice Reynato Puno and Associate Justices Leonardo Quisumbing and Consuelo Ynares-Santiago, who chair the Second and Third Divisions, respectively.

The high court said that in determining a "political killing," to be considered were the political affiliation of the victim, the method of attack and the involvement of state agents.

It said the special courts should give priority to cases of activists and media personnel.

The court said "mandatory continuous trial … shall be terminated within 60 days" from its commencement and "judgment shall be rendered within 30 days from submission for decision unless a shorter period is provided by law or otherwise directed by this court."

No postponement will be allowed, except for "clearly meritorious reasons," it said. "Pleadings or motions found to have been filed for dilatory purposes shall constitute direct contempt and shall be punished accordingly," it said.

The high court also said all single-sala courts should be considered special courts for the cases involving militants and media practitioners "and for this reason shall give priority to these cases in their trial calendars.

It added that in stations with no spe-

99 SPECIAL/ A6

Mayors push for Vilma

WINNING KISSES

The winners of the Binibining Pilipinas competition pucker up during Saturday's coronation night at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City. From left: Liezel Verses, first runner-up; Nadia Lee Cien Shami, Bb. Pilipinas International; Margaret Nales Wilson, Bb. Pilipinas World; Anna Theresa Licaros, Bb. Pilipinas Universe, and Abigail Lesley Cruz, second runner-up. *(Story on Page A2.)*

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Actress' candidacy for gov endorsed

By Christian V. Esguerra

IT'S NOT OVER TILL it's over.

Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos may have already given up her gubernatorial bid in Batangas, but a number of mayors appear bent on convincing her to change her mind.

These mayors, representing key cities and municipalities in the province, are to personally appeal to the veteran actress in a strong show of support for her during the 7 a.m. flag ceremony at the Lipa City Hall today, according to two sources privy to the matter.

"Something big is about to unfold during the flag ceremony," one of them, who is close to Santos' husband Sen. Ralph Recto, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The other source, a ranking Christian church official in Batangas, said the mayors and other local officials would show up at the flag ceremony to express their disapproval of Santos' decision to abandon her gubernatorial bid.

Both sources declined to be identified, saying they didn't want to be the object of criticism of politicians in the already heated political environment in Batangas.

Santos earlier said she would

MAYORS/ A22

CASHING IN ON POLITICAL ADS

GMA network to earn ₱500M from candidates

By Nini Valera

FOR GMA NETWORK, THE COMING election spells big business in terms of advertising revenue.

The network hopes to cash in on political ads and generate at least P500 million from the senatorial candidates, the biggest advertising buyers during the campaign period.

Felipe Gozon, GMA chair, president and CEO, told the INQUIRER on Thursday that the P500 million in projected revenue from political ads this year was a small slice of the network's total business.

"Last year, we made P10 billion in advertising revenue," he said. "So the P500 million from political ads is not really that big."

He said that the P10 billion from advertising revenue last year represented 56 percent of the total "ad spend" of traditional advertisers.

"Our programs generally rate higher

GMA/ A23

ABS-CBN: More money by 'simple arithmetic'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE COUNTRY'S LEADING TV NETWORKS are once again gearing up for a full-blown war.

This time, it's not for ratings supremacy but for the big bucks that will come with the May elections.

An ABS-CBN executive described as a "modest figure" GMA 7's projected revenue of P500 million from political advertisements.

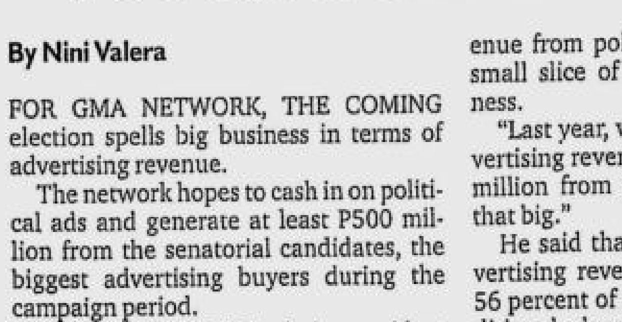
Bong Osorio, head of ABS-CBN's Corporate Communications, told the INQUIRER yesterday that "simple arithmetic dictates that P500 million is too conservative an estimate."

He noted that there were 24 candidates in the administration and opposition senatorial tickets.

"Assuming that each (candidate) would spend P10 million, campaign expenses would total P240 million already. But you simply can't run a national campaign with only P10 million. If a well-funded candi-

ABS-CBN/ A23

Girl, 7, conquers bay in Palawan



ANA Karenina "Siobe the Shark" Dalabajan swims to her feat.

GERALDFORDE TICKE/CONTRIBUTOR

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Hoping to land in the Guinness Book of Records, 7-year-old Ana Karenina "Siobe" Dalabajan yesterday swam across Puerto Princesa Bay, braving big waves, a scorching sun and the stings of jellyfish.

Dubbed "Siobe the Shark," the 3-foot-9-inch (115-cm) girl was joined by a cluster of other swimmers, including her two elder sisters, Shasa and Isha. Not all of them made it across, however.

The swim was part of this city's 135th founding anniversary celebration dubbed Balayong Festival.

It was originally designed to cover a distance of 5 kilometers, starting from Barangay Sta. Lucia to Baywalk, but was moved to adjacent Barangay Mangingisda—stretching the distance to more than 8 km.

Siobe and the others jumped in at 7:45 a.m. and reached Baywalk in 4 hours, 33 minutes and 2.69 seconds, to the cheers of hundreds of spectators, led by Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn.

It was not immediately clear if Siobe's feat would land her in the record books.

The user-edited online encyclopedia Wikipedia on the Internet cites a 7-year-old boy, Braxton

GIRL/ A4

Opposition abandons Estrada as campaign issue

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE APPOINTMENT OF SEN. SERGIO Osmeña III as campaign manager of the Genuine Opposition confirms that its drive to sweep the Senate election in May has run into deep trouble, three weeks into the campaign.

Osmeña replaces Mayor Jose Victor "JV" Ejercito of San Juan, who has decided to concentrate on his reelection in the core constituency of the dynasty of former President Joseph Estrada.

The dumping of Ejercito signals the abandonment by the opposition of the Estrada strategy of making the election a test of his vindication and political rehabilitation following his ouster in People Power II in 2001 and the plunder charges lodged against him by the government under President Macapagal-Arroyo.

With his narrow base and limited political experience, JV was not up to the task of forging a united opposition, and commanding the respect of the fractious United Opposition, despite his father's push behind the scenes to build a formidable machine to oppose the administration's resources and party apparatus. Estrada personalized the campaign, including his selection of issues, by using his dynasty to implement his strategy.

During the past three weeks, the opposition's drive faltered and lost momen-

OPPOSITION/ A6

EZ2 ⑮ ㉖ | Mid-Day **SUERTRES** ⑧ ⑥ ⑧ | Evening ⓪ ④ ⑥
(All in exact order)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑮ ㉔ ㉚
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Second FrontPage

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thundertorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/04/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

After cutbacks, oil firms raise prices

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER REDUCING PUMP PRICES THREE TIMES this year, oil firms yesterday raised gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices by 50 centavos a liter.

Initiating the price increase was Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. at 12:01 a.m. yesterday, followed by Chevron Philippines Inc. (formerly Caltex) at 6 a.m.

Total (Philippines) Corp. jacked up its prices at 12:01 a.m. today, followed by Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc. at 6 a.m.

With yesterday's price increases, premium unleaded gasoline prices are now retailed at between P35.61 and P37.20 a liter, diesel between P30.45 and P33.65 a liter, and kerosene between P33.53 and P37.70 a liter.

Before the increase, pump prices of gasoline, diesel and kerosene had gone down by a total of P1.80 a liter since the start of the year, with two of the price reductions taking place last month.

First this year

Yesterday's price increase was the first for the year.

Prices of crude oil and refined petroleum products in the world market have been gradually increasing these past weeks, after softening at the start of the year.

During the first three weeks of February, the regional benchmark Dubai crude averaged $55.16 a barrel, up from only $51.69 a barrel in January, according to data from the Department of Energy.

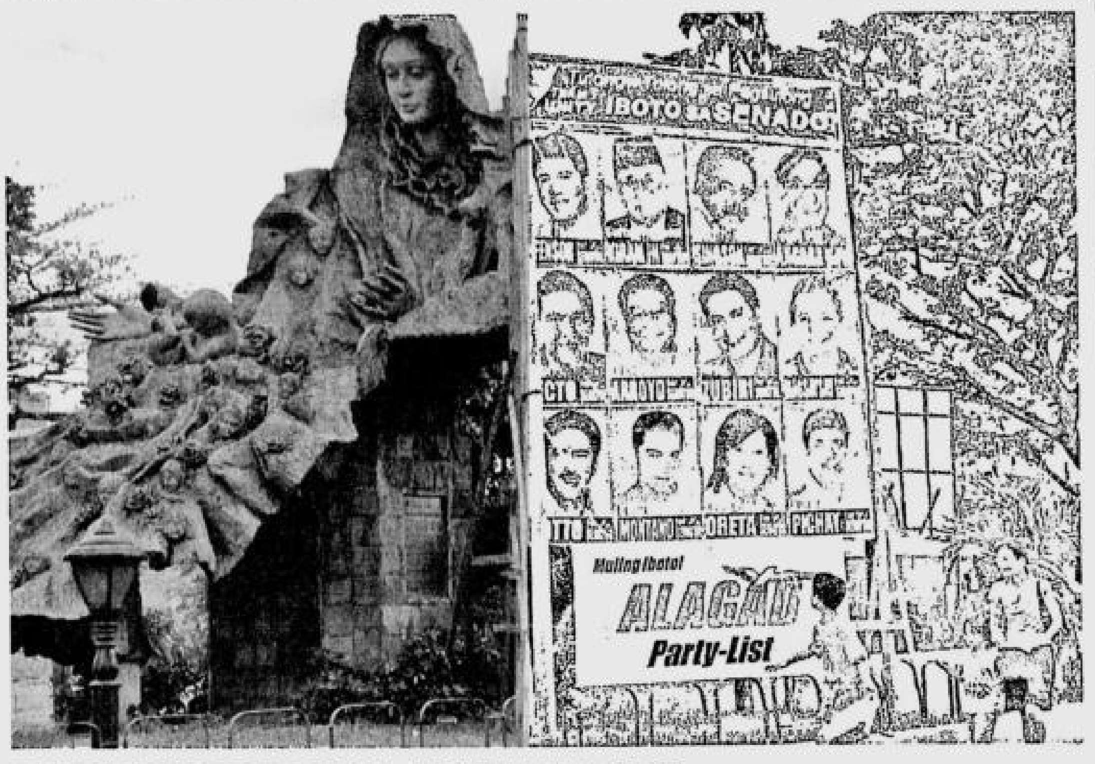
The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) averaged $65.25 a barrel as of Feb. 22, up from $61.59 the month before. MOPS is the benchmark for refined petroleum products.

MOPS-based diesel climbed to an average of $71.29 a barrel in the first 22 days of February, from an average of $68.45 in January.

Fears over Iran

Jitters over Iran's uranium enrichment program continue to affect oil prices. Iran is the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' No. 2 exporter.

Iran has failed to meet the deadline set by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the nuclear watchdog of the United Nations, to stop its uranium enrichment program.



DEFINITELY NOT A POSTER-DESIGNATED AREA
Posters of Team Unity's 12 senatorial candidates and the Alagad party-list group block the view of the Monument to the Unborn Child on Anonas Street in Quezon City. Not only do the posters exceed the Comelec's 2-by-3 foot size specifications, they were put up outside the designated poster areas. *(For more election-related stories, see Pages A12 and A13.)* ROMY HOMILLADA

Top UP graduate is RP bet to Miss Universe pageant

By Armin Adina

A SUMMA CUM LAUDE GRADUATE of the University of the Philippines won the Binibining Pilipinas-Universe crown over 29 other contestants at the 2007 Binibining Pilipinas pageant held at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City on Saturday.

"It has been a long dry spell for the country in the Miss Universe (pageant). It has been so long since we last won. And I believe I have what it takes to bring the glory back to the country," said 22-year-old Anna Theresa Licaros after being crowned the country's representative to the Miss Universe pageant in Mexico in May.

A crowd pleaser from the start, Licaros has a Broadcast Communication degree and is currently among the top students at the UP College of Law.

Aside from winning the lion's share of the special awards—Miss Bacchus Energy Drink, Watson's Woman Award, Miss Philippine Airlines and Miss Natasha—Licaros also impressed the judges during the interview portion.

When asked to choose between the crown and her love life, Licaros replied: "It would definitely have to be the crown, because it is a once in a lifetime opportunity…and I know that my love life will wait for me once the crown is not on my head anymore."

Another favorite, television actress and video jock Margaret Wilson, was proclaimed Binibining Pilipinas-World. She also took home several other awards—Miss Photogenic, Miss Ever Bilena and Watsons Style Icon.

The 17-year-old said being an "artista" and being a beauty queen were worlds apart but she was excited about being crowned "the country's youngest representative to Miss World," the country's most elusive international beauty title.

Meanwhile, former Miss Philippines-Air Nadia Lee Cien Shami won the Binibining Pilipinas-International crown. A student, radio jock and model, Shami initially planned to join the pageant after finishing her studies but said her family prodded her to give it a shot this year.

Liezel Verses, adjudged Best in Long Gown, was first runner-up.

Best in Swimsuit Abigail Lesley Cruz was second runner-up.

Edferlyn Quintero was proclaimed Smart Texters' Choice. She made it to the semifinals after garnering the biggest number of votes from Smart telephone subscribers.

GMA to lessen campaign role to focus on economy

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO will play a smaller role in the electoral campaign in order to focus on the country's economic progress "rather than a daily tit-for-tat exchange with the opposition," Palace spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

In a Palace website posting, Bunye said campaigning would be carried out by the campaign spokesperson and the 12 Team Unity administration senatorial bets "while the rest of the Cabinet and the President attend to our people's basic needs."

Such a "dividing line," said Bunye, was needed to ensure that "economic gains are not held hostage to political rhetoric."

Team Unity campaign manager Reli German confirmed the new campaign policy. In a phone interview with the INQUIRER, he said he understood that the President could only be called on for big proclamation rallies and the *miting de avance.*

Administration candidate Rep. Miguel Zubiri said this new line "is clearly understood by each member of Team Unity."

"But definitely that will not stop her from calling on key leaders in key areas for us," said Zubiri over the phone.

Buoyed by reports of increased business confidence in the Philippines, President Arroyo issued her own statement yesterday assuring the business community that she would not allow the ongoing electoral battle to derail her from making the "hard decisions."

"Making hard decisions is not enough. I am resolved to cut through the political noise and bring the benefits of the economy to the people," said Ms Arroyo.

She said the economy could not be derailed by electoral battles.

The American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines said Friday that investors from the United States would be putting in up to $3 billion worth of investments in the country's infrastructure, manufacturing and information technology sectors.

Robert Sears, the AmCham executive director, made the announcement at a roundtable discussion with the President, noting the improved fiscal situation and business optimism in the country.

Sears had said the figure could "potentially go up to $9 billion in a year" if the government would "take care of some red tape issues."

"I think the confidence level this year is higher than at the same time last year," he said, insisting that US businessmen and other foreign investors in the country were not too concerned about the results of the midterm elections in May.

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Filipino studes to join Pope in world prayer

THE VATICAN HAS INVITED CATHOLIC Filipino students to join Pope Benedict XVI in a worldwide simultaneous praying of the rosary on March 10.

Asia will be represented by students of the University of Santo Tomas on the occasion of the annual Day of European Universities started by the late Pope John Paul II five years ago.

Organized by the Vicariate of Rome's Office of University Pastoral Care, the event had gathered students of universities in Germany, France, Portugal and Poland in prayer. This is the first year the event will include an Asian university under the theme "New Ways of Europe-Asia Cooperation."

The global praying of the rosary will be aired via satellite beginning midnight on Saturday. The Philippines' participation will take place at Plaza Mayor fronting the main building of the UST campus on España Boulevard in Manila.

The students will be joined by Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Fernando Filoni and Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines who will lead a concelebrated Mass three hours before the event.

Filipinos last joined a pontiff in prayer in 2002 on the occasion of the World Meeting of Families held in Manila. The pope then was John Paul II. Pope Benedict XVI was then Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *Christian V. Esguerra*

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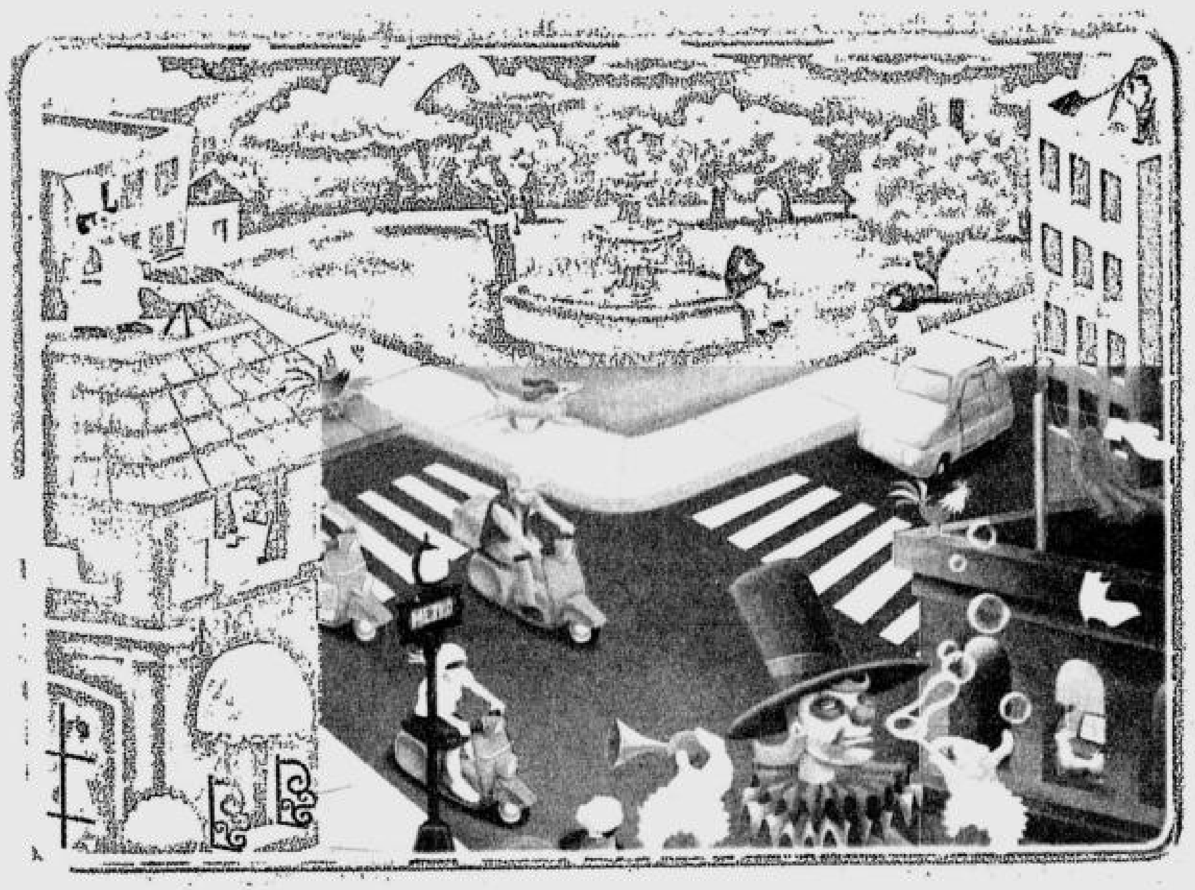

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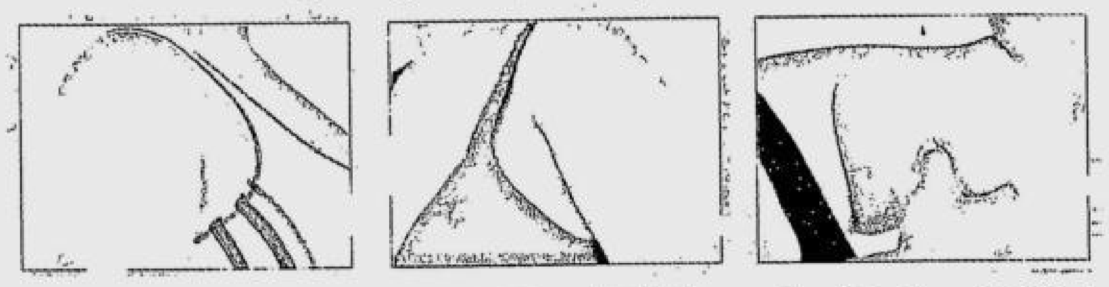

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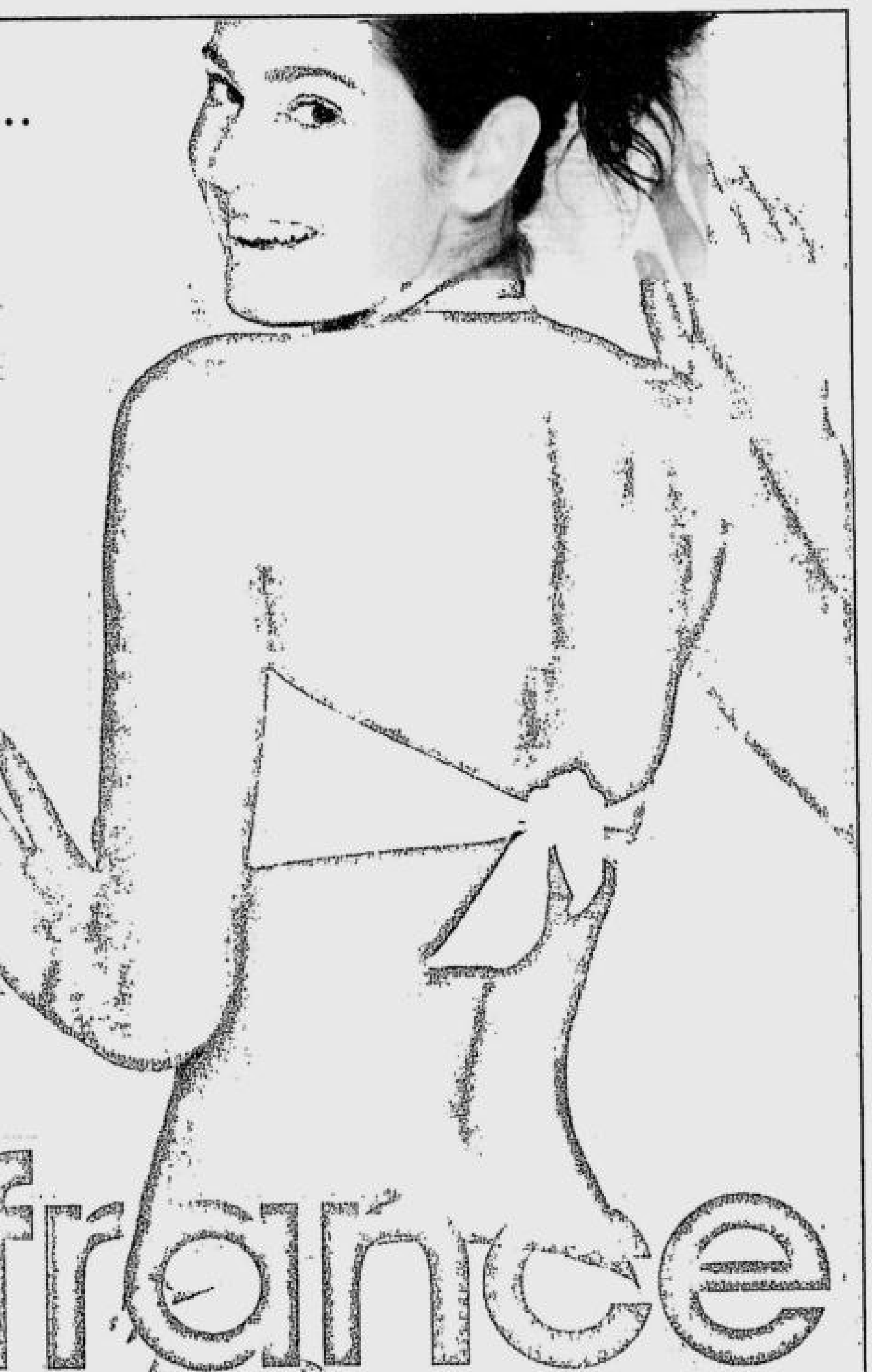

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Girl, 7, conquers bay in Palawan

From page A1

Bilbrey, who covered 2.25 km in 47 minutes while swimming across the Alcatraz Channel in California on May 22, 2006.

"I'm glad because I have accomplished what I had long wanted to do and I have realized my dream to be on TV," said Siobe.

Challenge to others

She said she was also happy because she had made her family proud.

"I hope other kids will try to break my record," she said.

Siobe is a Grade 1 student at Palawan State University and is the youngest of three children of environment specialist Dante Dalabajan. She was only 4 years old when she joined a "Summer Learn to Swim Program" here.

Unmindful of the strong current, Siobe even looked like she was having fun during her swim, sometimes playing with the other swimmers and waving to escorts on a boat.

Jellyfish in their way

At one point, coach Danny Egot had to egg on the swimmers to get on with their attempt.

The only problem they encountered was jellyfish. Some of those in the group were heard crying, "*Ang kati* (It's itchy)."

Siobe's teammates at the Puerto Princesa Hammerhead Shark Swimming Team (PPHSST) joined in the swim. Those who completed the crossing included Jeron Mercader, Jefrey Pelosa, Gerrol Castillo, Clariss Faith Layacan, Alfie Pilapil and Maureen Mercader.

The girl's father, Dante, said he tried to discourage Siobe from pursuing her plan to swim across the bay.

On Dec. 31 last year, she successfully crossed the 2.5-km stretch from Isla de Caña to Baywalk, and this spurred her to try and conquer Puerto Princesa Bay.

"Several times, I tried to stop her from doing this but I guess no amount of words could hold her back," he said before the swim.

"All I can say right now is that I'm ecstatic," he said after his daughter made it across.

He said Siobe had been challenged by the accomplishment of a 5-year-old boy, Justin Daniel Junio, who swam across the Mactan Strait in October last year.

Endurance, willpower

Coach Egot said that with Siobe's performance, "we hope that we will be able to gain more support and raise the awareness of the people regarding the protection of the sea and its environs."

The crossing of the bay aimed to showcase the endurance and willpower of the swimmers as well as encourage the private sector to support the swimming program of the city.

Egot said the swim was also intended to heighten public awareness about the need to keep Puerto Princesa Bay clean.

"We want the next generations to enjoy what Siobe and her generation had the privilege of enjoying—which is a clean area where kids can swim," he said.

Good grades, too

Siobe was 4 when she showed her mettle by winning her first medal (silver) in an aquathlon competition in 2004 in Puerto Princesa.

Last year, she brought home five more silver medals when she joined the Southern Tagalog Amateur Swimming Association Sprint Meet in Calapan City.

Despite her hectic training, Siobe has maintained her academic excellence, consistently being an honor student.

Geraldford P. Ticke, contributor

DALABAJAN is warmly greeted by spectators. GERALDFORD TICKE/CONTRIBUTOR

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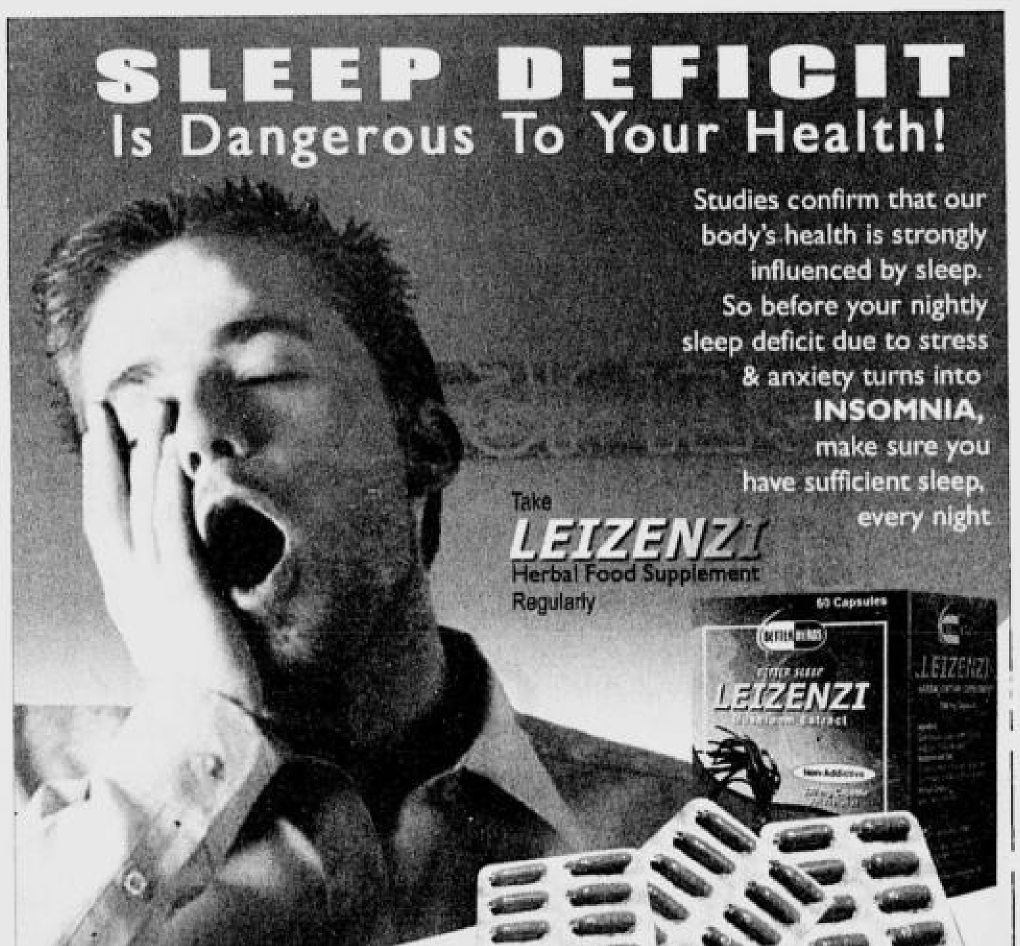
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Corrections

IN THE MARCH 2 issue, a front-page article—"Money, personal differences split RP 1st Mt. Everest team"—misspelled the surname of one of the mountaineers aiming to climb Mt. Everest via the north side in May. The mountaineer's name is Levi Nayahangan—not Nahayangan.

* * *

IN THE FEB. 28 issue, the banner story—"GMA backs Congress team's last plea to CGFNS"—erroneously identified Remigia Nathanielz as the president of the Association of Deans of Philippine Colleges of Nursing. The association's president is Carmelita Divinagracia. The same mistake appeared in yesterday's issue in a story on Page A9—"Team heads to US to plead nurses' case."

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a story on Page A18—"Comelec OKs 37 Senate bets, drops 42 others"—misspelled the first name of a senatorial aspirant. The candidate is former Sen. Edgardo—not Eduardo—Angara.

* * *

THE ARTICLE "No reason to Rewrite Christianity" which appeared yesterday in the front page reported that the documentary "The Lost Tomb of Jesus" should have premiered yesterday on the Discovery Channel. According to the Discovery Channel website, the documentary did premiere in the United States on March 4, but not in the Asian region. We regret the confusion.

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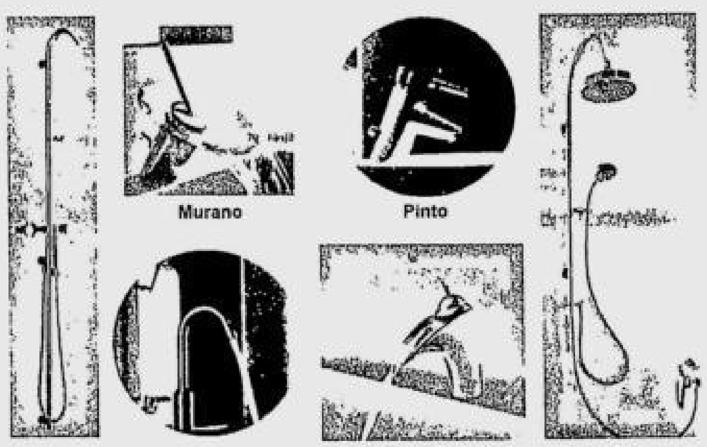
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Little tykes . . .

From page A1

men with little girls in tow, milled about and hastily filled out forms under the sweltering sun, even spilling out into the road.

It was the registration day for contestants of "Little Miss Philippines," a summer talent search of "Eat Bulaga" which is being revived this year after a yearlong absence. TAPE produces the popular noontime TV show.

The show, which began in the '80s, has produced the likes of Aiza Seguerra, a teacher's daughter and now a pop singer.

The parents and their excited daughters, who are aspiring to become the next child star via this talent search, never noticed that they'd brought traffic to a standstill.

"We were prepared for it, but we found the crowd unusually large," Helen de la Cruz, the assistant producer, said in an interview. TAPE received more than 1,000 applications, a record of sorts, she said.

Only minutes

Registration took only minutes, but TAPE's office did not run out of applicants from 8:30 a.m. until 3 p.m.

The record number of registrants could be attributed to TAPE's advisory that the registration would only be for a day. But De la Cruz said registrants could still be accommodated if they showed up past the 5 p.m. deadline.

So large was the crowd and so heavy was the traffic that the city's traffic enforcers were deployed on thoroughfares connecting to Xavierville Avenue.

TAPE guards had to send the parents and the girls home after handing in their registration forms through the grilled gate.

"As you can see, the crowds have thinned out,'" said traffic enforcer Orlando Corvera, clad in a yellow uniform. He was standing across from the office and waving motorists on toward Katipunan Avenue.

Not required

Some parents thought it wise not to take their daughters along.

"She wasn't required to come, so I decided not to bring her," said Bernadette Reyes, 28. She had commuted from Karangalan Village in Pasig City to register her daughter, Tricia May, 5.

It was her daughter's idea to join the contest. If she wins, she will have money to buy her own bicycle, Reyes said.

Others brought along their daughters, to make sure they would be complying with all the requirements. They did not want to miss the once-in-a lifetime crack at stardom due to a technicality.

And even if the audition isn't scheduled until next week.

Exposure

"Whether she wins or not, all we want for her is exposure or experience," Kathleen Rogacion, 27, a mass communications graduate married to a seaman from Imus, Cavite, said of her daughter Charleen Kyle, 4.

As she clung to her mother's hand, Charleen Kyle said, "I want to be an actress." She was dressed up in a pink shirt and pants, and idolizes young soap opera actress Bea Alonzo.

Most of the parents harbored hopes that their daughters will win the contest to get them out of poverty.

"She wants to finish her studies. If she gets lucky and wins the contest, that would be good for us because we are poor," said Divine Calayo, 47, who sells rice cakes to workers of a rice mill in Balagtas, Bulacan. She clutched her 6-year-old daughter Shein Ann's hand.

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Japanese leader stands by apology to 'comfort women'

TOKYO—PRIME MINISTER SHINZO ABE will stand by Japan's apology for forcing Asian women to have sex with Japanese troops decades ago, an aide said yesterday, following an outcry over Abe's recent denial of coercion.

"Though there are many definitions of coercion, Prime Minister Abe has said ... that he will stand by the Kono statement," said Hiroshige Seko, special adviser in charge of Abe's public relations.

Seko was referring to a statement issued by then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono, apologizing to victims of sex slavery.

Kono's 1993 statement acknowledged that many women were forced into prostitution, and that the Japanese military government was involved in some cases.

"He (Abe) has not denied the statement," Seko said on a TV Asahi talk show. He did not attempt to explain the apparent discrepancies between the statement and Abe's denial that coercion was involved.

Abe sparked international outrage last week by saying there was no evidence that women were forced into military brothels, also called "comfort stations," across Asia.

"The fact is, there is no evidence to prove there was coercion," Abe had told reporters on Thursday.

South Korea later lodged an official protest, accusing the leader of "glossing over the historical truth."

Rights activists in the Philippines also slammed Abe for labeling the slaves as common prostitutes.

Sixty-three surviving victims of Japanese sex slavery in Candaba,. Pampanga, challenged Abe to come to the Philippines and hear the details of the ordeal that had scarred them for life.

The Mapanique victims, calling themselves Malaya Lola (Free Grandmothers), got immediate support from Susumo Omori, spokesperson of the Santama Peace Cycle Network, who is in Pampanga for a weeklong bike-for-peace event in Central Luzon.

"I feel very angry about the statement of our prime minister... he (Abe) disregarded all the information given by witnesses and other evidence which had been acknowledged by Japanese courts," Omori told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Omori said Kono's statement in 1993 "publicly acknowledged the involvement of the Japanese military in the establishment and management of the "comfort stations." *AP; Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Movie glorifies 'kamikaze' pilots

TOKYO—TAKEJIRO ONISHI, VICE ADMIRAL of the Japanese Imperial Navy in World War II, announced the desperate strategy of using "kamikaze" pilots to fly their planes into United States ships when Japan was on the verge of losing the Philippines to American forces.

The first kamikaze attack took place off the coast of Leyté in the Philippines in 1944 and its success led to the recruitment of more young men for suicide missions.

More than 2,000 planes were used and 34 US ships were sunk in Japanese suicide attacks in the last few months of the war, according to a Japanese encyclopedia.

"One thing I want to make clear is that the suicide attacks by religious fanatics around the world [today] are completely different from the special attack forces," Tokyo Gov. Shintaro Ishihara told reporters.

"They are random attacks on civilians. The special attacks were clearly acts of war," he said.

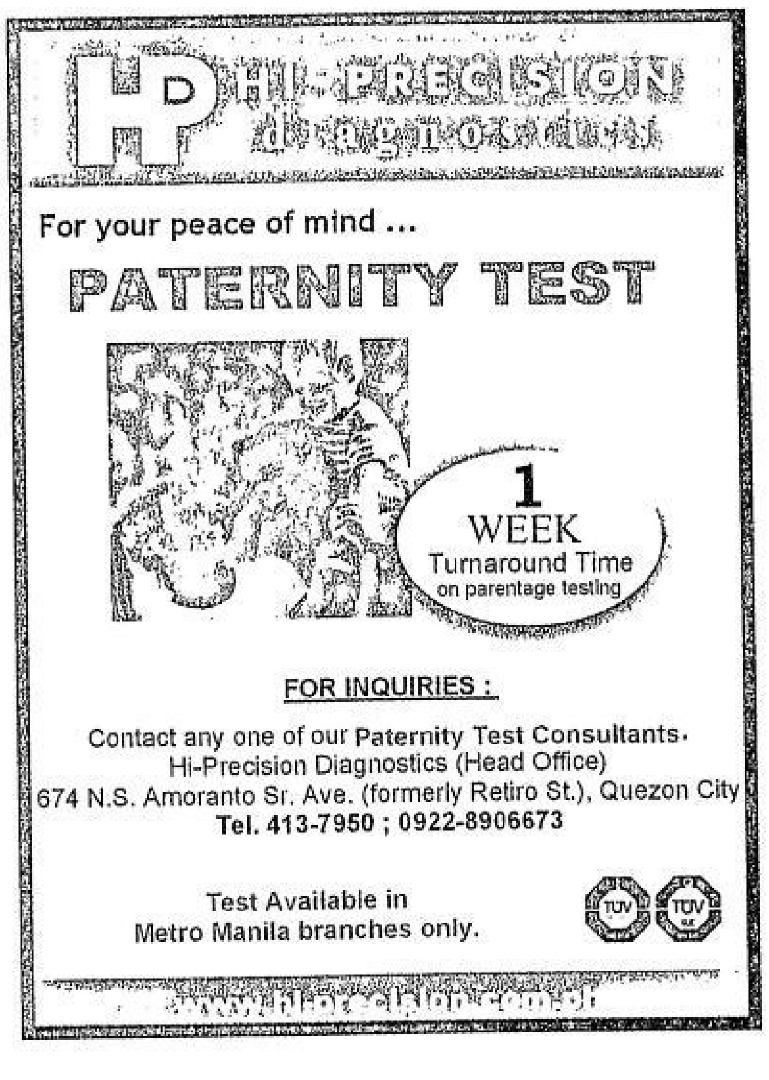
Ishihara has launched a publicity campaign for a film celebrating the bravery of its wartime "kamikaze" suicide pilots on Friday, as Japan wrangled again with Asian neighbors over its World War II history. *(See story above.)*

In Japanese, kamikaze literally means "divine wind."

"I Go to Die for You," scripted by Ishihara, a 74-year-old nationalist writer and politician, tells the story of the young men, mostly in their teens and twenties, who were trained to crash explosive-laden aircraft into US warships.

Ishihara, set to stand for a third consecutive term as Tokyo governor next month, posed with the stars of the film at a hotel in the capital, in front of a replica Hayabusa plane of the type used by what were known as the "special attack" forces.

"I want to pass on the fact that those beautiful young people really existed," he told reporters. "I think it will resonate in the modern age." *Reuters*



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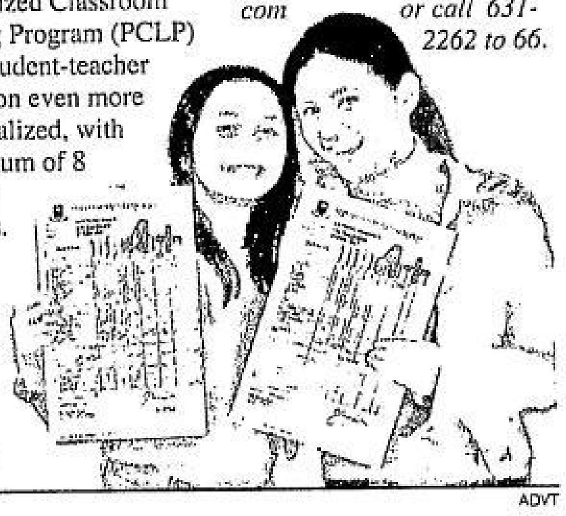

The Wrong School Can Make It Harder For Your Child To Come Out of His Shell

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOUR KIDS
By Mrs. Nellie Aquino-Ong

Albert Einstein's high school teacher is said to have made the following immortal prediction to Einstein's father: "*It doesn't matter what he does—he will never amount to anything.*"

History now tells us that Einstein did amount to something. His full potential came out later. He was what we now term as a "slow learner."

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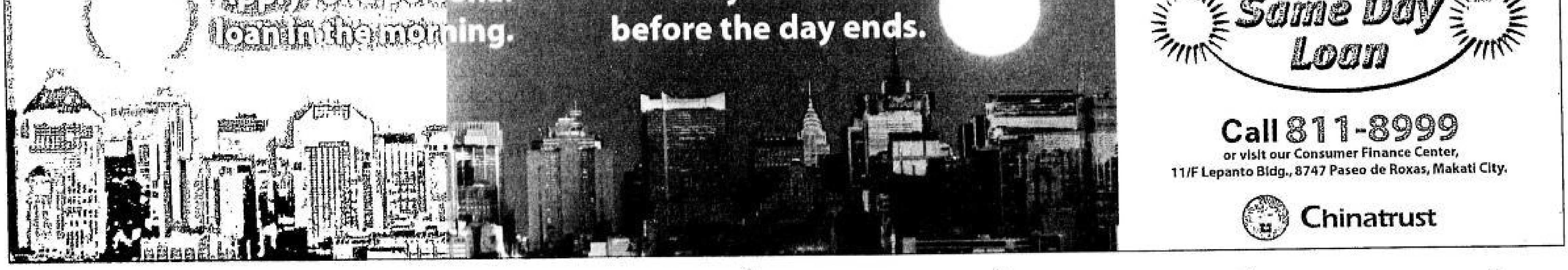

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Opposition abandons Erap issue

From page A1

tum. It has sunk deeper into disarray. The re-baptized Genuine Opposition is even more disunited today than it was in January when everybody, who thought he or she was somebody, scrambled to come on board the bandwagon and coalition leaders arrogantly slammed the door on them.

The message the public got from this disarray was that the opposition's campaign cannot be successfully run on highly personal steam, much less the charisma and populist rhetoric of Estrada.

Former Sen. Vicente Sotto III, a former Estrada ally who has crossed over to the administration's Team Unity as a senatorial candidate together with ex-Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta, has said the Estrada magic is gone.

Estrada a dead weight

Sotto can't be any more accurate. To put it bluntly, Estrada as a campaign issue and as an asset is a dead weight.

It may well be that the GO executive committee has recognized this, prompting them to change horses in midstream with the appointment of Osmeña as general campaign manager.

While it is true that Osmeña has considerable political experience gained from two terms (12 years) in the Senate, it remains to be seen whether he can re-ignite the sputtering opposition campaign. He has to rescue the opposition from the doldrums; otherwise, its candidates would be slaughtered by a well-oiled and amply funded administration machine.

Nitpicking elitist

The challenge facing Osmeña is that he has to revamp the opposition's strategy and repackage its issues to make the campaign catch fire across the spectrum of voters—from the middle class down to the poor masses.

Osmeña's reputation as a political strategist is on the line, but the first obstacle he faces is to erase the perception that he is an elitist, and as an oppositionist, he opposes for the sake of opposing, to the point of nitpicking.

From his statements to local reporters in Iloilo-Negros last week while attending a family function of the Lopez clan, there is little clue of what he intends to do, and what political formula he has to offer in repackaging the issues and reinvigorating the campaign.

Without prejudging Osmeña, he talked about safeguarding the ballot from cheating to avoid a repetition of the alleged 2004 election rigging, corruption of the administration, the poor performance of the economy, and the failure to reduce poverty.

While these issues are valid ammunition for a campaign, they are not the issues that can make the voters angry sufficiently enough to enable the opposition to win at least nine seats and take control of the Senate.

Human rights issue

It is what Osmeña omitted that gives the public misgivings that GO might be ignoring an issue that is causing considerable concern among the people—the human rights abuses stemming from the spate of extrajudicial murders.

The omission reflects Osmeña's elitism. The issue affects the middle class and the poor, especially the latter—not the rich. It makes people angry and inspires fear. The value of this issue to drum up negative votes can be discounted only at the risk of the opposition losing relevance. This is the reason the public has much stake in the revamp of the opposition's campaign.

In a briefing with INQUIRER editors and reporters last week, GO candidate Alan Peter Cayetano revealed the extent of the discord tearing the GO apart over the inclusion of Senate President Manuel Villar and Sen. Francis Pangilinan in its Senate lineup.

It was revealed that the point in including them, although they have fiercely proclaimed their independence from the GO team, is that the inclusion scuttled the formation of a "third force" ticket.

It was feared that a third force would draw votes away from the opposition ticket and prevent it from winning enough seats to gain control of the Senate. The result of this shortsighted strategy is counterproductive.

Disappointing crowds

Villar remains as a reluctant "guest" candidate. Pangilinan has been dropped and the team went into the campaign limping with 11 candidates, instead of 12.

Pangilinan is still running as an independent with the backing of the Drilon-wing of the Liberal Party, reducing his chances of reelection. Pangilinan gained nothing from his dumping; neither did the GO.

The disunity plaguing the opposition has taken a toll on its campaign. Its rallies have had disappointing crowd turnout. Cases in point were the proclamation rally of its senatorial candidates at Plaza Miranda, which drew a thin crowd of no more than 6,000 people, and its rally in Makati City, supposed to be a stronghold of Mayor Jejomar Binay, who failed to deliver the mass.

These are wake-up calls to avert disaster. Osmeña's task is to turn the tide. He has much work to do.

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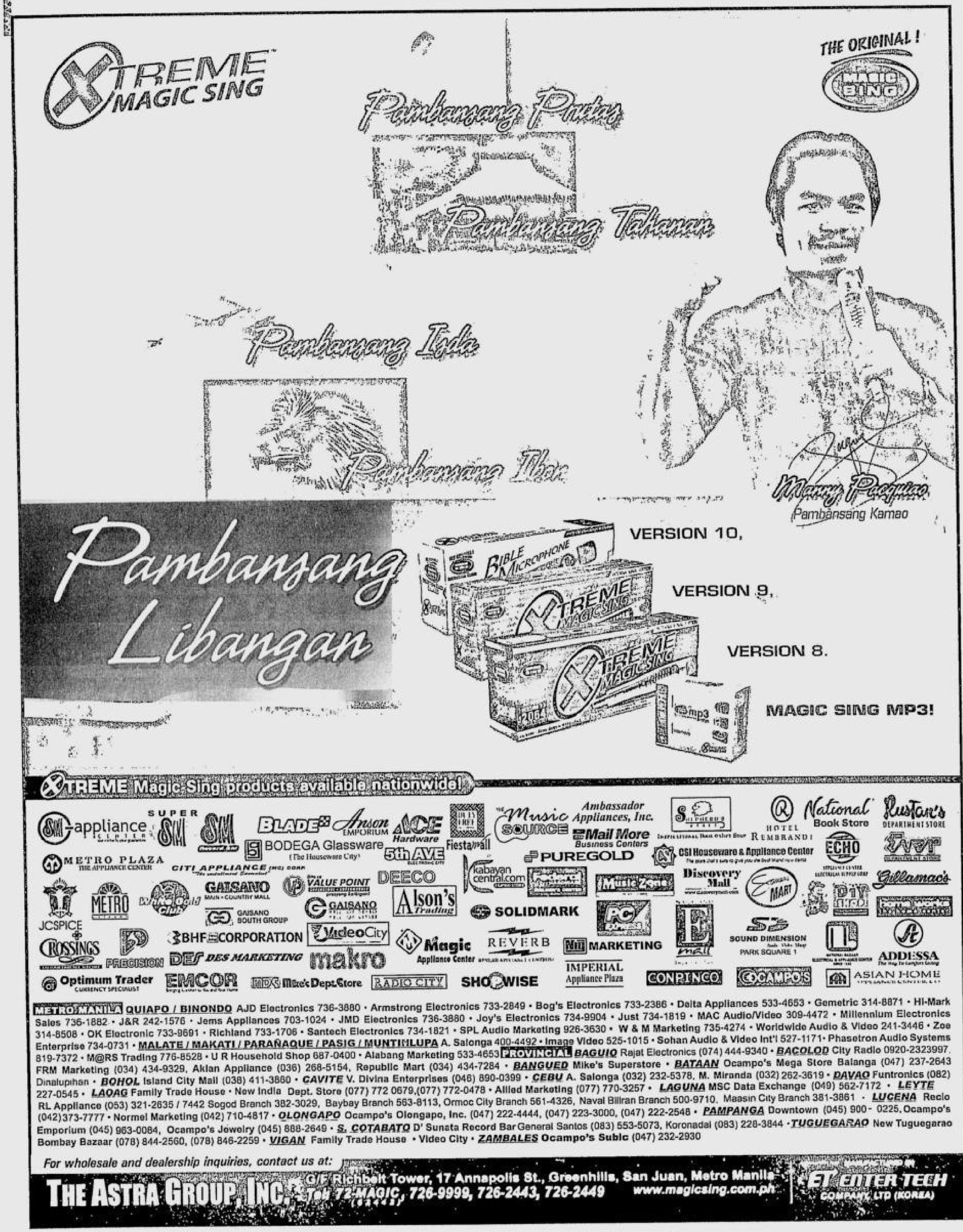

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99 special courts to try extrajudicial killings

From page A1

cial courts, the branches where the said cases have been raffled off should follow the guidelines for the special courts.

For trials of extrajudicial and media killings that have begun, the regional trial courts to which these have been assigned should continue the proceedings, and follow the time period prescribed.

Status report

Special courts were ordered to submit a status report on cases of extrajudicial and media killings every tenth day of the succeeding month and failure to do so would result in salaries and allowances withheld and other administrative sanctions.

Puno has strongly condemned the spate of extrajudicial killings.

The human rights group Karapatan has listed more than 800 victims of political violence since 2001. The INQUIRER count is 274.

Puno announced the plan to set up special courts to try extrajudicial killings following recent visits by the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions Philip Alston and representatives of the European Union.

Assault on rule of law

"The extrajudicial taking of life is the ultimate violation of human rights. It cannot be allowed anywhere, and it has to be resisted everywhere. Extrajudicial killings also constitute brazen assaults on the rule of law," Puno has said.

In the administrative order, the high tribunal noted that the extrajudicial killings of political activists and media practitioners have been confirmed by the Jan. 22 report of the commission headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo.

The Melo report largely blamed the military for the murders.

The order also said President Macapagal-Arroyo wrote to Puno saying she was alarmed by the "unabated" killings of activists and members of the media and recommended the creation of the special courts to hear and try the criminal cases.

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Kris bids TV and intrigues adieu for now

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

TELEVISION HOST KRIS AQUINO HAS BID temporary goodbye to television work in an official statement read by her friend and co-host Boy Abunda on the ABS-CBN talk show "The Buzz" yesterday.

Abunda expressed the hope the statement would end all speculation concerning the state of Kris' marriage to basketball player James Yap, who had been linked to beauty clinic receptionist Hope Centeno in a scandal that hogged media attention the past two weeks.

Aquino said she was writing the statement from her hospital bed at the Makati Medical Center. Last Wednesday night, she was rushed to the hospital for the second time after experiencing "severe contractions.

She recounted the Wednesday night emergency in her statement, saying: "I came dangerously close to delivering Baby James at only 29 weeks. My contractions were very strong, coming at three- to four-minute intervals. My baby's heartbeat was weakening and my cervix was already dilated."

Precisely because she was "fearful about the condition and ultimate survival of my son," she said she would be taking a leave from television the next two months.

"I say a temporary goodbye to all of you," she said.

She reiterated that "in the coming weeks," her main focus would be to be "the best mom I can possibly be to Josh (her son by actor Phillip Salvador) and his baby brother."

She said she was taking a break not only from show biz, but from intrigues.

She stressed in her statement: "The only way I can succeed [in being the best mom] is to leave this spectacle behind me and totally retreat from the public eye."

While Baby James was mentioned four times in her statement, there was no mention of his father, James Sr.

Deo Endrinal, Kris' manager, told the INQUIRER Edu Manzano would be pinch-hitting for Kris on the noontime game show "Game KNB."

"He had a taping today," said Endrinal, who is also Business Unit Head at ABS-CBN. "We see no need to find a replacement on 'The Buzz' because we have Boy and Cristy Fermin there."

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'Cough up our money!'

Tonyboy Cojuangco was forced last year by the Supreme Court to return 111,415 shares of the Philippine Telecommunication Investment Corp. (PTIC) for their being part of the ill-gotten Marcos wealth.

All's well that ends well, right?

No sir! There is still the unfinished business of collecting from Tonyboy the dividends that accrued from the PTIC shares. He's not yet off the hook, until he coughs up money that belongs to the Filipino people.

And how much does Tonyboy owe us in dividends? Up to 1993 alone, then Rep. Joker Arroyo estimated it at $500 million. In Congress, Arroyo railed at Tonyboy's family emerging as the "richest" in the Philippines, at the expense of poor Filipinos.

"In the Fortune and Forbes listing of the richest families in the world, only the Ayalas were listed but they [unlike the family of Tonyboy Cojuangco] did not reach the $300 million mark," said Arroyo then. "What we are talking about is $500 million... we cannot treat this as a laughing matter."

We, the people, are not laughing either.

Tonyboy must now owe us billions of dollars in dividends he got from the ill-gotten shares. **Justice has to prevail: Tonyboy should be made to return what does not belong to him!**

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4 Abu members killed; new group leader eyed

FOUR MUSLIM MILITANT ABU SAYYAF GUNmen were killed in fresh fighting in Jolo, officials said Saturday, as US troops prepared to conclude the Balikatan exercises. *(See story below.)*

"Based on intelligence reports on the ground, four rebels were killed and six of my soldiers were wounded," in fighting on Thursday, said Col. Mark Supnet, commander of the Army's 104th Infantry Brigade in Sulu.

"We will continue with our relentless effort against the Abu Sayyaf until they are wiped out," Supnet said, vowing to press the offensive against the al-Qaida-linked group.

Some 10,000 soldiers have been deployed in Jolo in recent months to destroy the Abu Sayyaf and capture two Indonesian Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) members, Dulmatin and Umar Patek, who have taken refuge with the group.

The two Indonesians are suspected of involvement in the 2002 Bali bombings that left more than 200 people dead.

Meanwhile, a little-known Filipino militant was being considered to lead the Abu Sayyaf group after US-backed troops killed its two top leaders, security officials said Saturday.

Citing intelligence information, Lt. Gen. Eugenio Cedo, head of the Western Mindanao Command, said Yasser Igasan had been tipped as a possible replacement.

Igasan, who had been to Libya and the Middle East, was being considered because of his terror training abroad, his good education and his crucial connections with possible foreign financiers—traits which other Abu Sayyaf commanders lack—two security officials revealed on condition of anonymity, citing policy.

Not much is known about Igasan's background.

His name cropped up during intelligence operatives' monitoring of goings-on within the Abu Sayyaf following the separate killings of its chieftain, Khadaffy Janjalani, and his presumed successor, Jainal Antel Sali Jr. or Abu Sulaiman, the two security officials said.

Igasan, an explosives expert, may have already returned to Jolo, Cedo said, adding: "He's from abroad; he has connections."

When Filipino commandos killed the two top leaders of the Abu Sayyaf, it left the ragtag group splintering into smaller units.

They are now engaged in a cat-and-mouse chase with the military in Jolo's vast jungle interiors as they lose their grip on towns that they once terrorized, Cedo said.

"There are now only about 400 to 450 left," he said. "Our chase is relentless, we will not stop until we finish them off."

"They are disorganized, and leaderless," he stressed, but warned that the group could still mount deadly attacks if allowed breathing room.

With the Abu Sayyaf now on its "death throes," Cedo said their JI cohorts were also trying to flee the island as the military noose tightens.

Military sources said Patek and Dulmatin two weeks ago tried to escape by boat to the nearby island group of Tawi-Tawi which shares a common sea border with Malaysia but failed.

The sources said there was no armed encounter but the two fugitives headed back to Jolo. No further details were given. *AFP, AP*

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Balikatan exercise ends on high note

BATO-BATO — VILlagers sang ancient tribal songs and schoolgirls waved paper flags on Saturday to mark the end of the joint US-Philippine military exercises on an island that is a bastion of Islamic rebels.

The annual Balikatan (shoulder-to-shoulder) exercises did not include war games this year. Instead, the two military forces built roads and schoolhouses and provided health care to thousands of people in Mindanao, a region riven by poverty and insurgency.

"The legacy of the American people is not these projects alone, these schoolbuildings or this road," said Don Loong, a provincial administrator speaking at the closing ceremony in Bato-Bato, a seaside village on Jolo island.

"It is giving us hope again, by showing us that peace is possible. We do not want the peace of silence, we want the peace of development."

Jolo is one of the poorest areas in the country and the headquarters of the notorious Abu Sayyaf group.

The closing ceremonies, attended by Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane, Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney, came off peacefully, but security was tight.

"Balikatan is ending, it has been two weeks of intensive medical projects, wells, schools, clinics," Kenney told reporters. But she assured the people the social service projects would continue. "We will keep going (on) here (because) people here deserve a chance for peace."

Scores of soldiers with automatic rifles, machine guns and armored cars ringed Bato-Bato, a collection of shacks on stilts and some concrete houses set between the sea and banana plantations, coconut palms and bamboo forests.

Ebdane told the INQUIRER that he was impressed with what he saw which was a far cry from the last time he visited Sulu.

Reuters with a report from Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, March 5, 2007
2nd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Dn 9:4-10
Gospel: Luke 6:36-38

Jesus said to his disciples, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

"Don't be a judge of others and you will not be judged; do not condemn and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you, and you will receive in your sack good measure, pressed down, full and running over. For the measure you give will be the measure you receive back."

Commentary

In this season we hear from many of those who have gone before us in faith—those who were faithful, who trusted in spite of temptation, suffering and testing, and spoke out on behalf of the people. They are our models for our own living Lent together. Daniel prays for the people who have done evil (do we?) and includes himself among them and cries out, "Justice, O Lord, is on your side." And yet, Daniel also knows God as "O Lord, our God, you are compassion and forgiveness!" and he begs forgiveness for all.

Jesus exhorts us that we must be like God our Father who is compassionate—we must live with passion and mercy that is shared and given to all, even to those who do not deserve it, or think they need it, and we must remember that we fall into that group first and foremost. We are to pardon, give and give without measure so that we might know the vastness of our God's compassion towards us.

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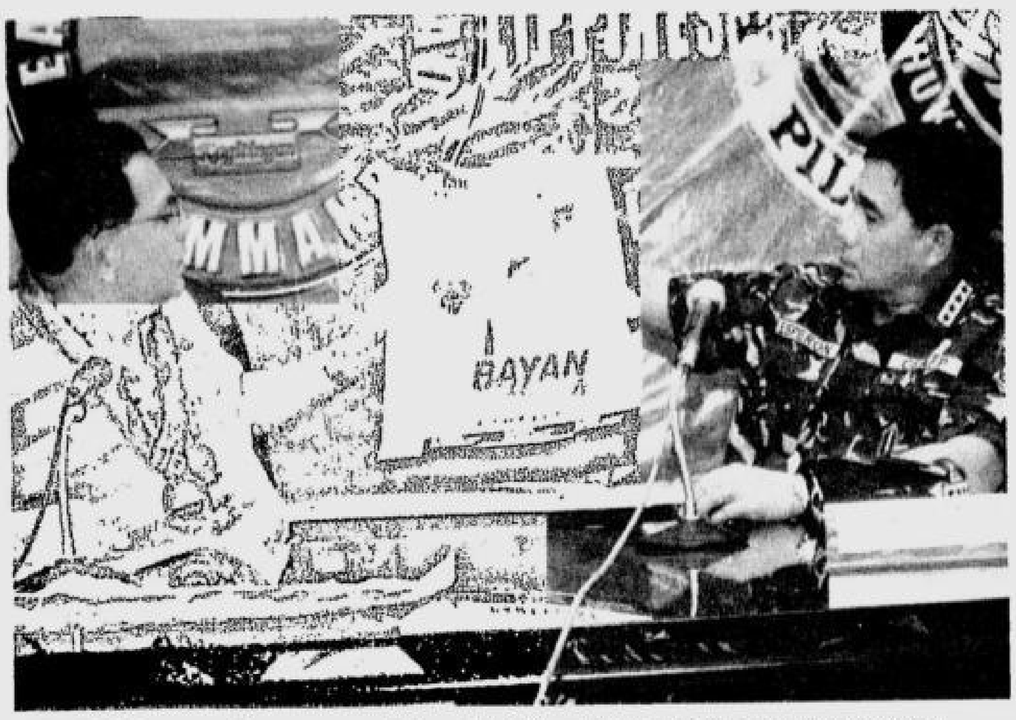

DEFENSE Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. (left) and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon hold up an election poster of party-list group Bayan Muna that was allegedly recovered by soldiers after an encounter with New People's Army rebels in Toril, Davao City, on Feb. 28 during which two soldiers were killed. BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Esperon: Troops deployed upon people's request

By Jeffrey M. Tupas and Dennis Jay Santos
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—ARMED FORCES OF THE Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon denied allegations that soldiers deployed in Metro Manila and some remote areas of the countryside were campaigning against party-list groups alleged to have links with the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Esperon, who accompanied Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. in a visit to Mindanao on Saturday, said in a media conference that contrary to claims of party-list groups, the deployment of military troops to Metro Manila was actually upon the request of local government leaders to curb "drugs and to stop the recruitment of groups always seen on the streets."

He did not elaborate on his statement but stressed that the presence of troops in the slum areas of Metro Manila and other parts of the country was actually appreciated by many and should not be interpreted as a move against party-list groups.

"If the soldiers are electioneering, then we have to look at it and conduct an investigation. [Those] we deployed in these areas are not even armed. [They are] soldiers who are involved in civic actions," Esperon said.

He said that it was actually the local residents themselves who did not want the presence of party-list groups.

"*Ayaw na ng mga tao sa* party-lists (The people do not like the party-lists)," he said.

Early this month, party-list group members were turned away by residents of villages they had tried to visit, Esperon said.

This, he said, happened in the barangays of Lupang Pangako in Payatas and Commonwealth in Quezon City.

Military spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro identified the groups as Bayan Muna and Gabriela.

"They (leaders of Bayan Muna and Gabriela) are just putting color to the presence of the military in these areas. We are not involved in electioneering. It is part of the military's program to safeguard villages against lawless elements," Bacarro said.

PAF to buy 26 trainer aircraft

THE PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE (PAF) IS FORTIfying its fleet of trainer and service aircraft this year, a measure that it hopes would speed up the training of new recruits to replace a significant number of pilots who have left the service for commercial airline employment.

PAF chief Lt. Gen. Horacio Tolentino said the Air Force will buy 26 additional trainer aircraft. Bidding will be scheduled soon to receive the first batch of planes by the last quarter of the year.

The new acquisitions will help cut down the waiting time of new PAF entrants for pilot training.

Admitting the PAF's dire lack of equipment, Tolentino said many junior officers from the 2005 and 2006 batches were still "queued for training" and were assigned instead to different units while awaiting their turn to fly.

"Our training aircraft are not enough to address the number of training pilots. At this time, many are on standby and waiting for pilot training. We need equipment to train them," Tolentino told reporters in a press briefing at Villamor Air Base last week.

Currently, the PAF has nine T-41Ds planes for primary training, the first stage of the roughly year-and-a-half pilot training, and six SF-260M Marchettis used for basic practice at Fernando Air Base in Lipa City. Last year, 97 new pilots graduated.

The Air Force has the capacity to train 50 pilots per class for a period of 18 months, Tolentino said.

When the trainer planes arrive, training could take less than a year, Tolentino said. He said they were preparing a training facility in General Santos City, where good yearlong weather makes continuous training possible, said Tolentino. *Tarra Quismundo*

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Telecom firm ordered to pay taxes

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME Court has denied the plea of Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc. (Digitel) to be exempted from having to pay provincial franchise and real property taxes in Pangasinan.

The high tribunal upheld the ruling of the Pangasinan Regional Trial Court that Digitel should pay the taxes and junked its contention that the legislative franchise allowed the company to pay the national franchise tax to the Bureau of Internal Revenue "in lieu of all taxes" on its franchise or earnings from it.

The high court said earlier rulings of the tribunal had made it clear that Section 23 of the Public Telecommunications Policy Act, which says that any advantage, privilege or immunity granted under existing franchises shall be made part of previously enacted franchises, did not intend to exempt Digitel from all tax payments.

Digitel had claimed that it was entitled to the same tax exemptions granted to Globe Mackay Cable and Radio Corp., Smart Information Technologies Inc. and Bell Telecommunication Philippines Inc. The three companies' legislative franchises allow them to pay only their income tax and a national franchise tax in lieu of all taxes on their franchises.

But the high court said Section 23 was only meant to exempt other franchise holders from regulatory or reporting requirements of the Department of Transportation and Communication or the National Telecommunications Commission and was not meant to be a blanket tax exemption, as held in earlier decisions.

10% VAT

The tribunal pointed out that another law had been passed abolishing the franchise tax on telecommunications companies, and in its place, a 10-percent value added tax was imposed.

This means the "in lieu of all taxes" provision in the franchises of other telecommunications companies has become inoperative, and that Digitel was not required to pay a national franchise tax and should pay the VAT.

As for the real property tax, the high court said Digitel was only exempt from paying real property taxes in the real properties "actually, directly and exclusively used" by it, pursuant to its franchise.

Effectivity

But it added that the exemption was only effective when Digitel's franchise was granted and which took effect on Feb. 17, 1994.

"In view of the unequivocal intent of Congress to exempt from real property tax those real properties actually, directly and exclusively used by petitioner Digitel in the pursuit of its franchise, respondent Province of Pangasinan can only levy real property tax on the remaining real properties of the grantee located within its territorial jurisdiction not part of the above-stated classification. Said exemption, however, merely applies from the time of the effectivity of petitioner Digitel's legislative franchise and not a moment sooner," the high court ruled.

It also ordered the Pangasinan government to recompute Digitel's liability based on its ruling.

Pertinent provisions of law respecting interests, penalties and surcharges should also apply to Digitel's liabilities, it added.

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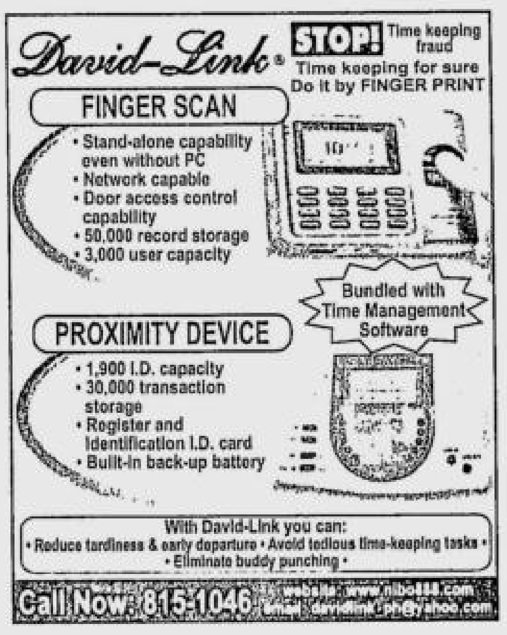

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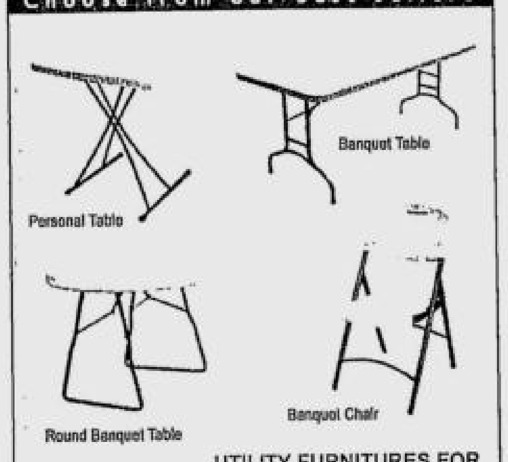

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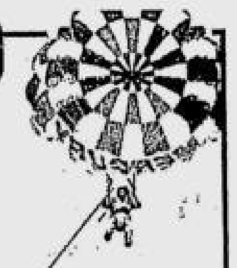

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• CREDIT AND COLLECTION MANAGEMENT	March 19 - 30, 2007	M-W-F	6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
• PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING	March 20 - April 3, 2007	T-TH	6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
• ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS EVERY SECRETARY, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT SHOULD HAVE	March 20 - 29, 2007	T-TH	6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
• GOOD HOUSEKEEPING: 5S	March 20 - April 3, 2007	T-TH	6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
• ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING FOR MGRS. & SUPERVISORS	March 17, 2007	Saturday	1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• HUMAN RELATIONS : KEY TO WINNING PEOPLE SUPPORT	March 24, 2007	Saturday	1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• TRAINING PEOPLE ON PROPER TELEPHONE BEHAVIOR	March 24, 2007	Saturday	1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER RELATIONS & HANDLING COMPLAINTS	March 17, 2007	Saturday	1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• EFFECTIVE PEST MANAGEMENT	March 18 & 25, 2007	Sunday	9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
• CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT	March 18 - April 15, 2007	Sunday	9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
• SHORT CUT TO EFFECTIVE ENGLISH	March 18 - April 15, 2007	Sunday	9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
• PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT & COST EFFECTIVENESS	March 18 - April 1, 2007	Sunday	1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• MANAGERIAL ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL CONTROL	March 18 - April 1, 2007	Sunday	1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• CASH MANAGEMENT	March 25, 2007	Sunday	1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM	March 21, 2007	Wednesday	6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
• PLANNING, DIRECTING AND CONTROLLING THE WORK	March 19, 2007	Monday	6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
• MOTIVATION : WAY TO GET MAXIMUM PERFORMANCE	March 23, 2007	Friday	6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
• WORK SIMPLIFICATION AND IMROVEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS	March 25, 2007	Sunday	1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

• FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	March 17, 2007	Saturday	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
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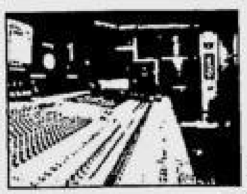

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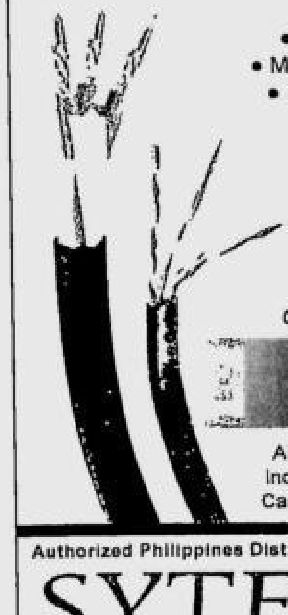

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Olongapo pols fight for piece of Chiz

By Arlyn dela Cruz

THEY ALL WANTED A PIECE OF "CHIZ."

Genuine Opposition senatorial candidate Rep. Francis "Chiz" Escudero was literally caught in the middle of a "tug-of-war" between rival politicians in Olongapo City during a press conference arranged for the GO candidate.

The incident which happened on Thursday in full view of local media involved incumbent Olongapo City Mayor James "Bong" Gordon and Vice Mayor Rolen Paulino who is running against the former in the May elections.

There were two versions of the story. One said it really happened while the other said it was all "drama" and that no such thing happened.

But a source who was with Escudero's party said the young senatorial candidate was stunned. "Chiz was speechless," the source said.

One account of what happened came from a cameraman based in Olongapo who said: "The mayor pushed Rolen away from Chiz."

The cameraman was among those who attended the press conference arranged by local media consultant Armin Santos at Wimpy's Restaurant on Rizal Avenue near the Olongapo City Hall.

"I didn't exactly see it for my attention was somewhere else but a local media man whispered to me that *"hinawi"* (he shoved) that was the word used, ni mayor si Rolen.

Santos said he himself was taken aback. "I was surprised at the turn of events because in the first place I didn't expect the mayor to be there."

There was even confusion as to who really had arranged the press conference for the popular opposition candidate.

Another source said it was not Santos but Mike Pusing who had arranged the press conference.

Eggai Geniza, a local broadcaster who interviewed Escudero for his morning show over radio station dwHL, said, "Rolen according to several eyewitness accounts was shoved by the mayor who suddenly entered the restaurant where the press conference for Escudero was supposed to be held."

In a phone interview, Paulino confirmed that he was indeed shoved. "It seemed that my lungs would collapse by the sheer force of it."

Asked how he reacted, Paulino said he left the restaurant and restrained himself from reacting physically in deference to Escudero who is a party mate in the Nationalist People's Coalition.

"Mas nakakahiya kay Chiz kung para kaming batang nagpang-abot doon kaya lumabas na lang ako at pinabayaan na lang si mayor na masolo si Chiz. (It would be a shame if we would act like children so I just went out and gave way to the mayor)."

Paulino, a former protégé of the Gordons, said the rest of the local media who witnessed the incident walked out with him, leaving behind only the crew of local station STV-6 and Pusing's group.

But Vic Vizcocho Jr., public and media information chief for City Hall, denied the incident.

From Wimpy's Restaurant, Gordon and Escudero held a motorcade up to Gordon College and then parted ways.

Escudero went on to Mansion Restaurant where Paulino was waiting and there faced members of the media who had earlier walked out.

Escudero declined to comment on the incident.

ELECTION '07

Teves collapses at Unity fete

DUMAGUETE CITY—A POLITICAL gathering of Team Unity senatorial candidates was disrupted Saturday night when Negros Oriental third district Rep. Herminio Teves was rushed to the hospital after he appeared to suddenly lose consciousness and vomited.

The gathering at the Bethel Guest House here, which was attended by about 200 barangay captains and local officials of the second district of Negros Oriental, was supposed to cap another hectic day of campaigning throughout the northern towns of the province.

The Team Unity candidates present were Mike Defensor, Edgardo Angara and Vic Magsaysay.

It was just after dinner and Magsaysay was done with his speech when Teves, 86, began shaking. Another congressman, Rep. Emilio Macias II of the second district, who is a physician, rushed to Teves' aid and laid him on the floor, allowing Teves to vomit.

"I thought he had a stroke or a heart attack," Macias later said, "his eyes were closed and his pulse was weak."

Teves was rushed to the Holy Child Hospital where he was confined for the night.

Defensor, who gave a press conference here yesterday morning, recounted that after the political gathering, the Team Unity candidates paid Teves a visit at the hospital and found him to be in high spirits.

Defensor quoted Teves as telling Magsaysay: "I had an attack when you mentioned that your wife is a Visayan." Defensor said Teves assured them that what he had was a simple case of indigestion. *Alex Pal, Inquirer Visayas*

Cayetano drops 'Peter' from name

By Christian V. Esguerra

FROM NOW ON, JUST CALL HIM "ALAN Cayetano."

Genuine Opposition senatorial bet Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano has decided to drop his second name in the wake of the Commission on Elections' approval of the candidacy of Joselito "Peter" Cayetano.

It was a strategic move for the outgoing Taguig-Pateros representative, who noted that votes cast either as "Cayetano" or "Peter Cayetano" would be considered spoiled.

"That's why I appeal to my supporters to please write 'Alan Cayetano' in the ballots," he told the INQUIRER yesterday.

But he maintained that the adjustment in name didn't mean that he was giving up his bid to disqualify the other Cayetano for being a nuisance candidate.

The Comelec on Friday approved the candidacy of the other Cayetano of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, along with those of 36 other senatorial hopefuls.

Even if the Comelec refused to dismiss the other Cayetano's bid, the lawmaker was hoping that the body would favor a parallel disqualification petition he had filed. The hearing is set for 10 a.m. on Wednesday.

"I have full faith that the Comelec will be impartial, will rule on the merits and see through this ploy," Cayetano said in an e-mailed statement.

He was convinced that his namesake had been floated by the administration to spoil his candidacy. A check by Cayetano's staff in his namesake's community supposedly showed that the other Cayetano's nickname was 'Jojo,' not "Peter."

The lawmaker was not buying the Comelec's argument that the other Cayetano could not be disqualified because he had been endorsed by a legitimate party like the KBL.

He maintained that the Comelec should have given more weight to the issue of one candidate spoiling another's bid by confusing the voters.

Cayetano said the Comelec contention "sets a very dangerous precedent and, in fact, encourages parties to field namesakes to confuse voters for as long as they are endorsed by a party."

Urban poor for Trillanes

By Fe Zamora

DETAINED GENUINE OPPOSITION SENATORIAL aspirant Antonio "Magdalo" Trillanes IV, who is unable to campaign personally, has found himself a campaign network among the urban poor.

This was revealed by former Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman who said that during consultations with various sectors prior to the finalization of the opposition's senatorial slate, Trillanes' name cropped up among the favorites of urban poor groups.

Soliman said she was "surprised" by the outcome of the consultations. "It was the result of a process, and we respect that," she said.

Trillanes would have run as an independent candidate. But after consultations with civil society groups, however, Trillanes was included in the GO slate.

Two other candidates—Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino and Sonia Roco—also figured favorably among civil society, Soliman said.

She said that during the consultations, the group came out with criteria on whom to vote for.

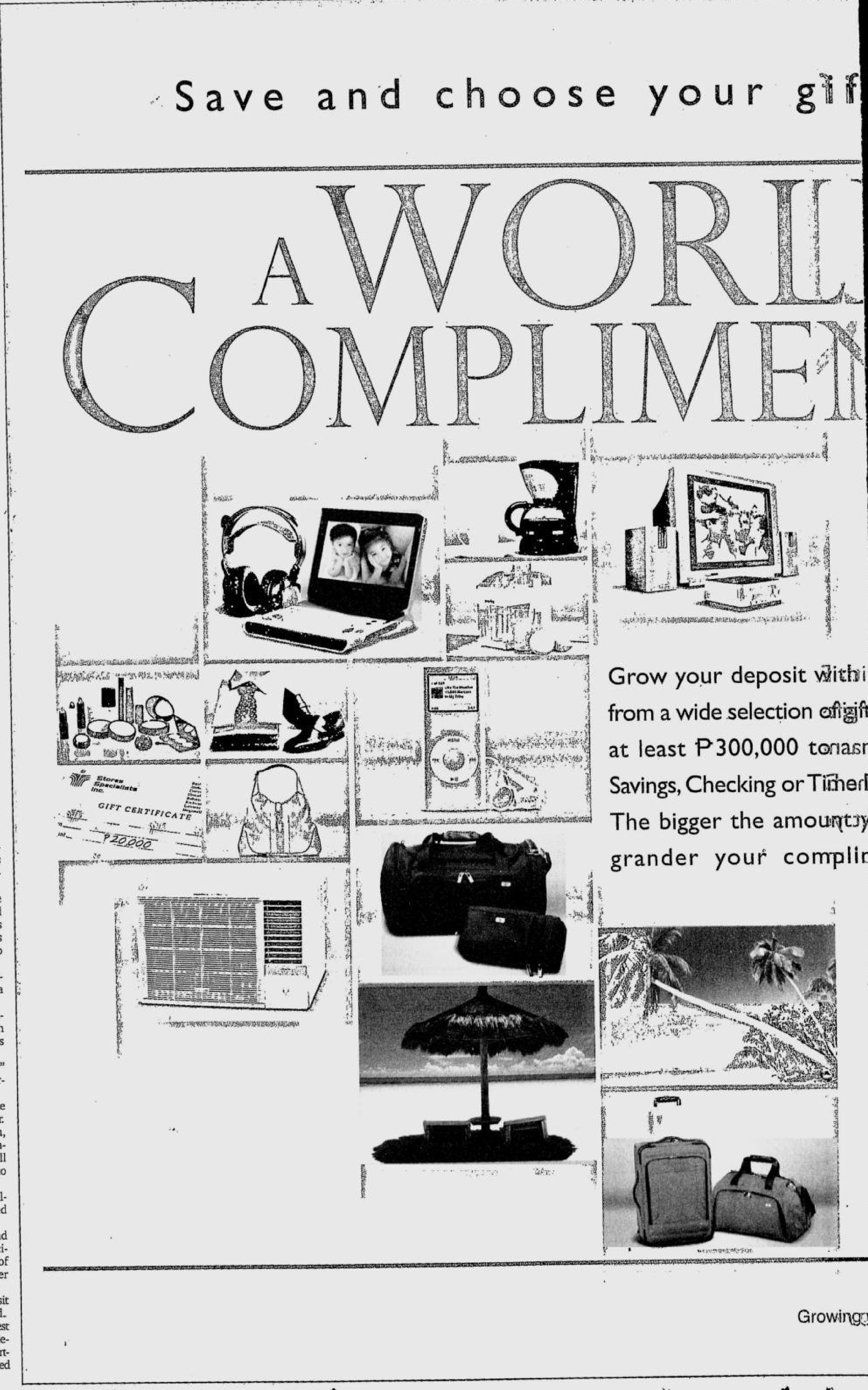
"We support candidates who are pro-truth, meaning candidates who will make themselves accountable to the people, and we will support candidates with a commitment to poverty reduction," Soliman said.

Honesty, competence and integrity were also cited among the qualities of the favored senatorial bet.

Soliman said her group, the Black and White Movement, had entered into a "principled partnership" with the GO, an alliance of opposition political parties cobbled together by former President Joseph Estrada.

"We don't have a formal role in GO, but we sit down for consultations on issues," Soliman said.

Born on Aug. 6, 1971, Trillanes is the youngest among GO's senatorial candidates. He has been detained at a military stockade while awaiting court-martial for his alleged participation in the aborted July 2003 Oakwood mutiny in Makati City.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Noynoy to battle Tessie over Aquino

BATANGAS CITY—AFTER OVERCOMING the first hurdle in his candidacy, opposition senatorial bet Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III is preparing for another legal battle, this time with his aunt, administration senatorial candiate Tessie Aquino-Oreta.

He wants the "Aquino" votes to be counted in his favor, and not in his aunt's favor.

He said his lawyers will file a petition today before the Commission on Elections, asking for a ruling on the issue.

Aquino, a three-term congressman and son of former President Corazon Aquino and the late Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., is running for senator for the first time under the Genuine Opposition slate.

But he found himself running against his aunt, Oreta, a sister of his father's, who is seeking to make a Senate comeback under the administration Team Unity ticket.

Oreta won in 1998 under deposed President Joseph Estrada's ticket, claiming both the "Oreta" and the "Aquino" votes since there was no other Aquino running for the Senate at the time.

If the question is not settled, votes for "Aquino" may be declared as stray votes since both Aquino and Oreta can lay claim to them.

Earlier, the Comelec had declared among the "nuisance candidates" engineer Theodore Aquino, a distant cousin of Aquino's, removing another contender for the "Aquino" vote.

In an interview during a sortie in Batangas yesterday, Aquino said his legal team has prepared their case papers.

He said he believed a ruling from the Comelec counting the Aquino votes in his favor would in fact help both his and his aunt's candidacies.

"It will help both our campaigns (because in that way) we can see that votes intended for each one will be recorded properly," he told reporters.

He said aside from Aquino, votes for "Noynoy," his sole registered nickname, would also be credited to him.

Aquino said the Comelec should clarify who gets credit for the Aquino votes "otherwise there is the possibility that other sectors will take advantage of it."

Aquino is an official candidate of the Liberal Party faction under Sen. Franklin Drilon, which has allied itself with the Genuine Opposition coalition.

His fellow LP candidate, reelectionist Sen. Francis Pangilinan, is running as an independent. *Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

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OPINION

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Running vs Dato

EDITORIAL

SPARE A THOUGHT FOR SABAS ABANG MABULO, the three-term mayor of San Fernando, Camarines Sur. Last week, the United Opposition named him its candidate for congressman of the first district of Camarines Sur, against the President's second son, Diosdado "Dato" Arroyo.

It won't be an easy run, given that President Macapagal-Arroyo's considerable resources, especially those of the persuasive kind, will undoubtedly be placed at her son's disposal. But it is a necessary candidacy, because the people of Camarines Sur must be given a choice.

We are happy to note that Mabulo is highly qualified for the post, with his proven popularity and a reputation for competence and performance. But even if he weren't, the fact that he is contesting the post against the President's own son should be acknowledged and recognized.

In the first place, Dato Arroyo is—to use a resonant term of the political art—a carpetbagger. He hails from one place, grew up in another, but now presumes to represent the citizens of a third. Secondly, he is, indubitably, a dynast—a member of the country's most powerful dynasty, seeking a free ride to public office, to join his brother-congressman in Pampanga, his uncle-congressman in Negros, and, of course, his mother in Malacañang. How else explain his decision to seek political office, in his own name, in another vote-rich region?

Finally, he is the product of machine politics—that is to say, his still unannounced candidacy is the result, not of extensive consultation with political partners or of a groundswell of public support (as measured, say, by public opinion polls), but of an *areglo*, an arrangement entered into by the powers-that-be.

The many factions of the administration coalition had agreed, among themselves, to present Dato Arroyo as a unity candidate. For some time, the talk was he would run unopposed. By throwing his hat into the proverbial ring, Mabulo has, at least, made sure that the young Arroyo would have to give the voters of Camarines Sur a better accounting of himself.

The Arroyo candidacy is only one of several which are essentially unopposed. We will know the true lay of the land only on March 30, after the certificates of candidacy for local offices have all been filed. But whether there are more this year than before, or the number has gone down since the last election, this much is clear: Unopposed candidacies, by and large, are unhealthy for our democratic project.

Voters must always enjoy a choice. Why? Because politics deals often with what the great E. F. Schumacher called divergent questions: Many of the problems in politics admit of more than one solution.

A range of candidates offers an electorate a range of solutions, a variety of interpretations of the problems and opportunities before it.

Because in our system there is no minimum number of votes required to win political office (all a candidate needs is to have just one more vote than the next opponent), unopposed candidacies are virtual coronations. This may be useful in monarchies, but it is antithetical to the very spirit of democracy. "One man, one vote" (the great principle of equality) becomes "all it takes is one vote" (elections as ratification of a decision made much earlier, in the proverbial smoke-filled room).

So bravo for Mabulo and others like him. May their tribe increase.

International mockery

FOREIGN COMMENT

THE RULING BY THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE sounds almost like an international mockery. While it legally exonerates Serbia from its responsibility, it does not specify the responsibilities of the self-proclaimed Serbian Republic of Bosnia, whose militias operated under President Radovan Karadzic and Gen. Ratko Mladic. Both are being sought on war crimes charges by the Court and are now most likely hiding in Serbia under the shelter of local authorities.

At this point, we don't understand who were those who murdered more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslims or where they were from ....

The bloodiest genocide that Europe has witnessed after 1945 is left, so to speak, without an author ....

Never, since the onset of a democratic Europe, has the memory of so many innocent victims been so clearly sacrificed on the altars of international politics.

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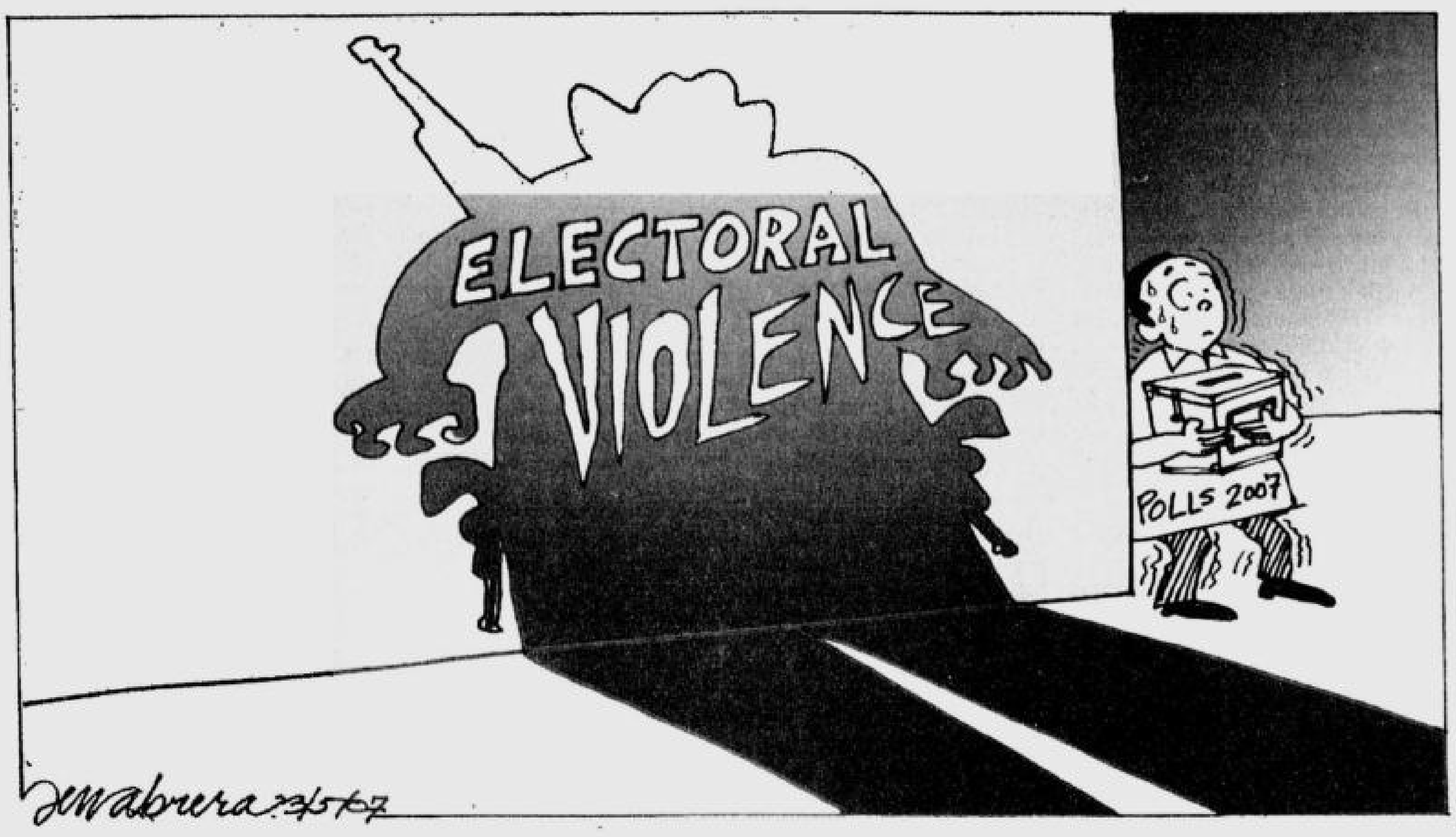

No food, no jobs, no homes—an economic boom?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE POLITICIANS WANT TO ENGAGE IN A debate on the alleged economic boom. What good will that do? No matter what they say, no matter what statistics they trot out, it is the people who know whether or not there is an economic boom. The administration will surely present figures to prove increases in the Gross Domestic Product, the exchange rate of the peso, exports, etc. etc. These increases mean nothing to the people.

The people have no food, no jobs, no homes, and scarcely have any health care—the best indicators of the state of the economy. Even if a million politicians shout that the economy is booming, if the people have no food, no jobs and no homes, nobody will believe them. But if the people have jobs and enough food to eat, nobody can convince them that the economy is in a mess.

Administration officials are quick to claim credit for any decrease in the prices of goods or increase in the exchange rate. It is because of the sound economic policies of President Macapagal-Arroyo, they trumpet. But when the stock market plunges, they blame it even more quickly on other stock markets.

Actually, neither GMA nor her administration has anything to do with the movements in the economy. The peso's exchange rate is going up because the value of the dollar is going down; oil prices are going down because there is an oil glut; prices of other commodities are going down because other countries are dumping cheap goods on us; our balance of payments is improving not because our industries are performing well but because of the blood, sweat and tears of Filipinos slaving abroad; some new investments are coming in not because of sound economic policies but because these "investments" are hot money being laundered here; the budget deficit has been erased not because of more efficient governance but because the administration has raised taxes. Now it is planning again to impose more taxes even when there is nothing more to squeeze from the taxpayers. Then it will boast that the increased government income is due to the economic genius of GMA.

The true state of the economy cannot be determined by a debate of politicians who know next to nothing about the economy. Neither can it be gauged by the wealth of Filipino businessmen in the Forbes list of the world's richest. Nor from our own list of the richest senators or congressmen. Rather it is seen in the rising number of the poor, the increasing number of beggars out in the streets, in the growing multitude of jobless people, in the proliferation of squatter shanties, etc. etc.

The politicians who fatten up themselves on the sweat and toil of the taxpayers are insulated from these realities. Others simply pretend not to see the increasing poverty. Self-styled economists look at figures written on pieces of paper and declare that we have an economic boom.

* * *

Mayor Toby Tiangco of Navotas is impatient over the delay in the signing by GMA of the bill (already passed by Congress) making his municipality (and San Juan) a city. Once the towns are converted into cities, each will get from the national government an additional P70 million a year in Interval Revenue Allotments (IRAs). That is why there is a rush among municipalities to be transformed into cities even if they have neither the infrastructure associated with cities. As long as a town can fulfill the legal requirements on income, population and land area, it can be converted into a city, never mind if it's as backward as any rural barrio.

Tiangco has another reason for being impatient. Thirty days after March 8, when the cityhood bill lapses into law whether or not GMA signs it, a plebiscite must be held, where Navotas residents will decide on whether or not they want their town to become a city. If GMA signs the bill next week, the plebiscite can be held 15 days after publication. That will be between March 13 and April 12.

Meanwhile, the elections will be in May where a congressman for Navotas will be elected. At present, Navotas shares one congressman (Rep. Ricky Sandoval) with its neighbor Malabon.

Tiangco says Sandoval is delaying the signing of the bill because he wants to insert an amendment to the bill. The amendment will let the congressman, on his third and last term, to represent the new city in the House until a new representative is elected. That will deprive Navotas of P210 million in community development funds during the three years between now and the next election in 2010, Tiangco says. On the other hand, Sandoval, who is no longer qualified for a fourth consecutive term in the House, will remain as congressman.

The fly in the ointment is that Tiangco (like San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito) belongs to the opposition while Sandoval is with the administration.

* * *

Trouble in paradise. You think it is nice to live in an exclusive gated community like San Lorenzo Village, one of the posh villages in Makati?

Think again. Right now, the homeowners are in uproar over the "coup d'etat" that allowed an unelected group to grab the homeowners' association, which is now headed by somebody not elected by the homeowners. And all but one of its board of directors are appointed. The other elected board members resigned one after another because they could not get along with the appointed ones. The lone elected board member now occupies only a minor position.

The board of the San Lorenzo Village Association (SLVA) cannot get along even with the barangay officials. The barangay gives an annual P20 million subsidy to SLVA. But recently, the SLVA banned barangay vehicles from entering the village. In retaliation, the barangay cut off all the village's streetlights.

You think the rich think and behave better than ordinary mortals? Think again.

Unraveling

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ALAN PETER CAYETANO EXPLAINS THE UNraveling of the opposition thus:

"We waited for them (the Wednesday Group, composed of Manuel Villar, Francis Pangilinan, Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto) .... The opposition was strongest in the second week of January when everybody wanted to be part of its senatorial slate .... (By waiting for them) we lost our momentum even before the campaign started."

Other observers would say it was true the opposition looked formidable late last year until January when a whole bunch of people was rushing to get into its ranks. It struck a contrast with the reluctance of people to fall in line before the administration recruiting office, or to be photographed anywhere near its head recruiter. The opposition, Cayetano suggests, should never have waited in vain for the Wednesday Group's love. It might as well have waited for Godot.

Herman Tiu Laurel, a staunch Erap supporter, believes the opposite. Far from threatening a potential debacle, he says, these developments augur well for success. In fact, he says, the Wednesday Group was threatening to create a "third force" before Erap moved to head it off. That would have blunted the opposition's edge by creating divisions within its ranks. To prevent such a pass, Erap reached out to the Wednesday Group. "I think that one of the achievements of Erap is that until now there is no third force."

In fact, it's neither the one nor the other.

The opposition is **not** unraveling only because it never raveled in the first place. Its fundamental mistake, or the mistake of the one associated with the so-called Genuine Opposition, is not that it waited for people who were never forthcoming. It is not that it did not get the strongest candidates to man, or woman, its roster. It is not even that it made the wrong moves in the process of who to get and who to drop in its roster, though this succeeded only in fragmentizing rather than unifying the forces ranged against Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

It is simply that it never understood the concept of the protest vote.

The ingredients of the protest vote you see easily in the Philippine elections of 1971 and the American elections of last year. Both elections saw the opposition rubbing the snouts of the administration candidates in the mud. Until January this year, that was where the local elections this May seemed headed to.

There are two main ingredients in the protest vote. One is that the administration is hugely unpopular. And it is hugely unpopular because of one particular issue that has shocked the nation. In the case of the Philippine elections of 1971, that was the Plaza Miranda bombing. The grenades that exploded in the *miting de avance* of the Liberal Party were matched by the anger that exploded in the mind of the public, which translated into a rejection of the administration at the polls. In the case of the American elections, it was the Iraq War. With no small help from the sight of the body bags being flown back home, Americans finally woke up seething with rage at having been duped into fighting another Vietnam War. And by an American president given to outright lying.

The other ingredient in the protest vote is that the opposition offers the possibility of being the solution to the problem. In the Philippine elections of 1971, the Liberal Party candidates were first of all the victims. Except for Ninoy Aquino, they were all at Plaza Miranda when it was bombed. But more than that, they also represented the hope that they could check a madman like Marcos. In the American elections last year, the Democrats also represented, well—more than the hope—the very real possibility America could extricate itself from the quagmire of Bush's making.

In both cases, the faces of the opposition were not particularly important. The story line was.

Up till January this year, that was the potential story line that was unraveling for the May elections. The opposition looked impregnable not because it was itself popular—the presence of Erap there, like a spider in the web assured it would not be so, particularly for the middle class—but because the administration was hugely unpopular. Or GMA was so. Marcos had his Plaza Miranda, George W had his Iraq War, GMA has her "Hello Garci" tape. All the opposition had to do was harp on the illegitimacy of GMA's government and proffer itself as the hope of ending it, and it had a rout in the making.

It did not.

Earlier this year, I saw Alan Peter Cayetano appear on Korina's show with Mike Defensor. Alan was saying GMA would be the issue in the elections which would lead to an administration debacle. Proof of it was that everyone was making a beeline for UNO while the administration people were trying to avoid GMA as much as they could. Mike was saying, not true, the voters would vote on the individual merits of the candidates and not where they stood with GMA.

Alas, no small thanks to the awesome self-destructive capabilities of the opposition, it's Mike's prediction that seems to be unraveling. All the mad rush into the opposition's camp produced was a lot of frenzied squabbling that has since become the talk of the town. At this late date, with two months to go before the elections, the public isn't riveted to the story line about the merry men (and women) of Sherwood Forest come to take on the Sheriff of Nottingham. It is being regaled with stories about love and betrayal, courtesy of Kris and Hope and the strange doings of the opposition. And all the anger and outrage that go with the protest vote are going to the dogs.

Well, I hope some of it goes straight into the welcoming arms of Kapatiran.

But, Jesus, the woman is lucky. If you're GMA, you're bound to think quite happily: With enemies like these, who needs friends?

Churchmen and politics (Part I)

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

AS THE ELECTION PERIOD HEATS UP, VOICES will once again be heard from the pulpit, and the charge of violation of separation of Church and State is bound to follow. It should be remembered, however, that the "non-establishment clause" of the Constitution, like the other provisions of the Bill of Rights, is a command addressed to the State. Thus only the State can violate it. As far as the churches are concerned, they can be beneficiaries of the State's violation of the non-establishment clause but they cannot be the violators. Thus when politicians decry a violation by the Church and churchmen of the Church and State separation principle, what they are really doing is violating not only free exercise but also freedom of speech and expression.

The key provision on free exercise is found, like the provision on non-establishment, in Article III, Sec. 5. "No law shall be made . . . prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Not content with that, Sec. 5 adds two other clauses: "The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights."

A violation of the free exercise clause by the State can come in the form of either prohibition or compulsion. Philippine cases on free exercise of religion are relatively few but not uninteresting. Let me just focus on the prohibition of religious test for the exercise of civil or political rights.

This prohibition is a corollary of the guarantee of religious liberty. The purpose of this provision is to render government powerless "to restore the historically and constitutionally discredited policy of probing religious beliefs by test oaths or limiting public offices to persons who have or, perhaps more properly, profess to have a belief in some particular kind of religious concept."

When the religious test that is imposed by law is overt and clear, the constitutional problem it presents is easy to resolve. For instance, if belief in the existence of God should be required as a qualification for public office, the violation would be clear. But there can be subtler ways of violation.

Not too long ago, the Supreme Court was asked to prohibit Jaime Cardinal Sin, Mike Velarde and other religious leaders from giving directions to their adherents on how to vote. The case was dismissed on technical grounds. But the substantive question remains alive, although no one of substance is pushing it.

One person who expressed in very strong language his opposition to religious involvement in politics was Barry Goldwater. The occasion was when the Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell criticized the nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor to the Supreme Court. Goldwater said: "The great decisions of government cannot be dictated by the concerns of religious factions . . . We have succeeded for 205 years in keeping the affairs of the state from the uncompromising idealism of religious groups, and we mustn't stop now!"

Eloquent the words may be, but the second sentence could not have been more inaccurate historically. If you measure it against history, whether American or Philippine, the statement is false. Churches have influenced American politics from the days of Thomas Jefferson down to the prophetic preaching of Martin Luther King and the pastoral letters of the American bishops. Likewise, in the Philippines, religion has been involved in politics from the days of Fathers Gomez, Burgos and Zamora down to the pastoral letters on social justice and on the conduct of elections. I do not see this involvement coming to an end. Depending on circumstances, it can even intensify. Thus it is legitimate to ask how religion fits into the Philippine political culture.

The issue can be broken down into several questions: (1) In their sermons and homilies, should religious leaders limit themselves to teaching general moral ideas, or should they draw specific political conclusions? (2) Should they oppose or support particular political parties or candidates? (3) Should they refrain from running for public office? (4) Should they engage in movements (e.g., lobbying and demonstrations) that put pressure on political officials? (5) Should they advocate specific policy conclusions or should they limit themselves to general recommendations? (6) When engaging in debate on public issues, should they use religious arguments or only secular arguments?

These are some of the questions that come up when one analyzes the objections to religious involvement in politics. The questions invite discussion, and I shall attempt to present my own thinking on the subject.

First of all, it is not enough to say the Constitution guarantees the freedom of expression of the clergy. The issue transcends mere constitutionality. Neither is it enough to assert that through the centuries Judaism and Christianity have firmly held that religious duty includes active involvement in politics and that the Scripture indicates that God cares about justice and public morality. I too firmly believe that the pursuit of justice and morality is a religious obligation for all believers. Moreover, I also believe that, when it comes to contests for the formation of public policy, individuals cannot effectively deal with the vastness and complexity of issues. There is therefore need for organized action. But whether engaging in individual or in organized action, the questions I have enumerated need to be dealt with.

(To be continued)

Silence of the lambs

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

WHAT IS THE GRP-MNLF PEACE AGREEMENT, and why has the demand for its "full implementation" become as repetitious as a mantra for the Misuari faction of the Moro National Liberation Front?

It has been 10 years since this agreement was signed by then President Fidel V. Ramos and MNLF's Nur Misuari on Sept. 2, 1996, which led to the election, unopposed, of Misuari as regional governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

But what do the ordinary constituents of the ARMM, especially the Tausug and the Samal population of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi think? Frankly, my dear, they don't give a damn.

In the first place, this agreement, the ARMM and all the miseries we Moros are now experiencing are the consequence of the combined talents of Ramos (the chief of staff of the armed forces that killed, tortured, raped and looted us and our islands), President Corazon Aquino (the dutiful widow who felt obligated to fulfill Ninoy Aquino's supposed promise to Misuari), and that Medical Miracle, Norberto Gonzales (who thought he had to return Misuari a past favor, and brokered the deal).

The agreement was therefore a bill of promises between Ramos and Misuari, period. We were not part of it, except in spirit, which never incarnated. It has not made our lives any better, only worse. On the other hand, it only made the lives of its signatories more glorious.

The process that went into the creation of the ARMM was, from the beginning maneuvered, contrived and crafted to perpetuate the marginalization and disenchantment of the Moros, such that it would appear as if their sufferings and frustrations were of their own making. In short, a grand co-optation.

(I was head of the media division of the Regional Consultative Commission that was tasked to draft the organic act creating the ARMM.)

The result was an administrative nightmare, a so-called region that was non-contiguous, with a constituency of several tribes and ethnic groupings speaking as many different languages, who neither loved nor understood each other.

Nonetheless, there was a lot of goodwill that attended the ARMM's birth—and much, much more, especially from the Islamic world, upon the assumption of Misuari as its governor.

A floppy diskette (the old wobbly kind) was mailed to me in 1997 showing a mind-boggling list of donations, endowments and pledges in petrodollars for the ARMM. Determining how much these were, and what for, is too tedious a task for me at the moment. Where they went is probably the same black hole that sucked in all those appropriations and donations released for the benefit of the Muslims beginning from the '60s to the present.

We were not "neglected." We inflicted this neglect on ourselves by empowering a long line of co-opted and corrupt leaders to speak and act on our behalf, by entrusting into their hands our fate as the religious minority in a country whose government was the legacy of a colonial regime that did nothing but make us the laughingstock of Philippine politics and the civil service.

With the traditional respect we accord leaders that is part of our Islamic good manners and right conduct, this was taken to mean docility. We closed our eyes and kept our silence despite all the embarrassment and the steady decline of our dignity as a people in the eyes of the Christian majority.

It was with this demoralizing history that when Misuari was installed as governor of the ARMM, we hailed the occasion and celebrated what we thought was our redemption from all our sufferings, and we willingly followed the Pied Piper even to the river.

We expected as much. After all, the Ramos-Misuari peace agreement, we thought, was paid with the blood of our true mujahideen who lost their lives fighting for our freedom from a colonial-structured government and by the thousands of other Muslims who perished as collateral damage in a heartbreaking, lopsided conflict.

But none of them were even remembered in the crafting of that agreement. And certainly not the mujahideen who survived to see that their comrades died in vain.

The implementation of the peace agreement, or whatever part of it has been implemented, automatically reduced the rest of us to second, even third-class citizens. This was what we deserved for remaining true to the constitutional national government, obeying its laws and paying our taxes, while the so-called Muslim separatist movement was fighting against the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The civil service, especially the underpaid teachers, suffered the most. Their meager salaries were regularly delayed for months, and at times—especially after a change of administration—simply disappeared, never to be found. Their GSIS premiums were a favorite target of this magic trick that made hundreds of millions evaporate into thin air. (Last Tuesday's episode of GMA-7's "Reporter's Notebook" related this sorrowful mystery in stomach-churning detail.)

We were the sacrificial lambs in this deal between Ramos and Misuari.

We have known for sometime now that the emperor was stark naked.

But we all entered into a conspiracy of silence; too embarrassed to complain because this time it was our own inflicting this injustice on us.

Too embarrassed to admit that we were used. We were pimped. We were conned.

* * *

Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com

Prove it's a lie

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE PARTY-LIST SYSTEM ACT GIVES COMELEC the power to refuse or cancel the registration of a particular group seeking a seat in the House of Representatives, on eight grounds: (1) it is a religious group or sect; (2) it advocates violence or unlawful means to seek its goal; (3) it is a foreign party; (4) it receives direct or indirect support from a foreign government, political party, or foundation; (5) it violates election-related laws; (6) it declares untruthful statements in its petition; (7) it has ceased to exist for at least one year; and (8) it has failed to obtain at least 2 percent of the votes cast under the partly-list system in the two preceding elections.

A total of 122 party-list groups participated in the 1998 elections, 162 in the 2001 elections, 58 in the 2004 elections. This year, the Comelec recognized 44 party-list groups. Ang Ladlad, which seeks to be the party list for LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered) individuals, was refused accreditation. The Comelec Second Division decided that the petition for registration and accreditation of Ang Ladlad Party should be "denied for lack of merit." The reason? The commissioners believe Ang Ladlad lied.

The resolution dated Feb. 27, 2007, signed by Presiding Commissioner Florentino A. Tuason Jr. and Commissioners Rene V. Sarmiento and Nicodemo T. Ferrer, said Ang Ladlad gave untruthful statements in the petition it submitted to the commission on Sept. 15, 2006. The commissioners said: "Contrary to petitioner's allegation in its petition that its membership is national in scope, reports from our field offices reveal that it doesn't exist in most regions of the country."

Are Ang Ladlad and the Comelec arguing apples and oranges? That is, does Ang Ladlad believe it not only has a national constituency, but supporters nationwide, a belief that the Comelec says it has proven false, by means of "reports" from its field offices?

If the Comelec believes Ang Ladlad is a figment of its organizers' imagination; that it is delusional; and that it cannot claim a national constituency on the level, perhaps, of the legions of supporters of such outstanding public servants as Eulogio R. Magsaysay of the Alliance of Volunteer Educators or Rodante Marcoleta of Alagad; or demonstrate to the Comelec's satisfaction a national machinery on the level of organizations such as The True Marcos Loyalist (for God, Country and People), then by all means the public should do its bit to prove the Comelec wrong.

It's a good time to do this. Ang Ladlad will be appealing the Comelec decision. Since Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez said "the question of constituency is very important especially if you declare your party or organization as a national party with national membership," then the urgent task is to prove that that constituency exists, and that the constituency is prepared to stand up for itself on a nationwide basis.

So write or call the Comelec officials to tell them you support Ang Ladlad, that you want to vote for it, that you intend to back it and that you want it to receive accreditation. Either the Comelec or Ang Ladlad was lying—and the way to prove who's lying is not to take the Comelec's slander lying down.

Call Commissioner Florentino Tuason at 527-3225. Also, call the Comelec hotline numbers at 525-9295, 525-9294, 525-9302, 525-9334, 525-9335 and 525-9345.

If you're outside Metro Manila, call your regional Comelec office. National Capital Region: 527-9624 or 527-0846; Cordillera Administrative Region: (074) 304-2444, Region 1 (072) 888-3145, Region 3: (045) 961-5015, Region 4: (02) 527-0835

Region 5: (052) 245-5147, (052) 480-4812, (052) 245-5807, Region 6: (033) 337-4124, (033) 338-1450, Region 7: (032) 416-9773, (032) 416-9774, Region 8: (053) 321-2045, Region 9: (062) 992-0519, (062) 991-2653, Region 10: (088) 350-3512, (088) 858-6269, Region 11: (082) 297-7221, (082) 297-3847, Region 12: (064) 390-2469, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao: (062) 991-4011, Caraga: (088) 342-4976. Or if you're overseas, call your nearest embassy or consulate.

Fax a note to the Comelec at 525-9301. Write chairman@comelec.gov.ph or comm_tuason@comelec.gov.ph, or to Commissioners Tuason, Sarmiento, and Ferrer at this address: 8/F Palacio del Gobernador, Commission on Elections, Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila 1002

Leave a comment online in the Comelec's blogs: "inside the Comelec" (http://comelec.wordpress.com), "james jimenez" (http://jimenez.wordpress.com), and "Overseas Absentee Internet Voting" (http://oaiv.wordpress.com)

If you believe Ang Ladlad should be accredited as a party list, you have this week to express support and add your voice to those questioning the decision of the Comelec Second Division. One call. One fax. One e-mail.

To his credit, Sen. Ralph Recto said: "[T]he Comelec may have its reasons in denying the accreditation of this party list, but what can't be denied is that it clearly passes the marginalization criterion, which is the litmus test in party-list accreditation."

Our national policy is clear: "The State shall promote proportional representation in the election of representatives to the House of Representatives through a party-list system of registered national, regional and sectoral parties of organizations or coalitions thereof, which will enable Filipino citizens belonging to marginalized and underrepresented sectors, organizations and parties, and who lack well-defined political constituencies but who could contribute to the formulation and enactment of appropriate legislation that will benefit the nation as a whole, to become members of the House of Representatives." Ang Ladlad deserves that opportunity.

Of senior citizens, discounts, credit cards

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

FIRST OF ALL, A NUMBER OF FRIENDS HAVE ASKED ME why I was moved from Sunday to Monday, and from a horizontal to a vertical layout. My response: A case of civilian supremacy over the military.

* * *

For many years, since my medicine needs rose because of various ailments often connected with the aging process, I had tried to use my credit card for medical purchases which now run into four-digit figures on a weekly basis. Each time I would present my credit card at the Mercury Drug outlet in our neighborhood, the clerk would inform me that the 20-percent senior citizens' discount was available only for cash payments. It was futile to argue with the clerk or even with the branch manager, as they would invoke company rules which they had to follow. Not being very knowledgeable with regard to the provisions of the Senior Citizens' Law, and since the medicines were needed on a regular basis, we accepted their ruling although with much reluctance. Many restaurants and airlines were honoring the senior citizens' discount even with the use of a credit card, and yet this distribution giant in such a vital sector of the economy appeared to be able to determine by itself what the senior citizen was entitled to in terms of discounts.

Last January, Carlos Manalastas of Sampaloc, Manila decided to do something about this problem. He wrote the INQUIRER, asking if the Mercury Drug interpretation of RA 9257 known as the Expanded Senior Citizens' Act, authored by then Sen. Noli de Castro and Rep. Eduardo Zialcita, was correct.

In reply, Vice President De Castro wrote: "I would like to assure Mr. Manalastas that senior citizens can avail themselves of the 20-percent discount regardless of the manner of payment for the purchase of medicines."

As I mentioned in an earlier column, armed with a copy of the Vice President's letter, I proceeded to the Kamuning branch of Mercury Drug and presented my requirements accompanied by the prescriptions, purchase slip booklet and my senior citizen's ID card. After being informed of the total cost, I presented my credit card. As usual, the clerk politely informed me that the 20-percent senior citizen's discount was only available for cash payments. After I showed him a copy of Vice President De Castro's letter, he disappeared for a few minutes. The assistant branch manager then showed up, informing me that the matter had to be referred back to the home office.

When I returned home, I spoke to Vice President De Castro, relating to him my experience. He immediately took steps to address the problem by sending a letter to the president of Mercury Drug Inc., Ms Vivian Q. Ascona. He informed the company that "upon presentation of the senior citizen's identification, there is no other condition imposed for the grant of the 20-percent discount . . . . The law does not distinguish whether or not the purchase is on cash basis or through credit card,"

In a lengthy reply, Ms Ascona raised the problem Mercury Drug was having with the BIR which "treated the discount as a deduction from gross income instead of as a tax credit." She also said, "we are selling at a loss every time we sell to a senior citizen and each sale is draining our capital. Accepting credit cards in payment for such sales would further compound our financial sufferings."

In a meeting chaired by Vice President De Castro and attended by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Trade Secretary Peter Favila, Finance Secretary Gary Teves and Ms Ascona, it was decided that the problems with the BIR were a separate matter and would be addressed separately. The benefits granted to senior citizens should not be held hostage to this issue.

Last Tuesday, Jessie Andres, chief of staff of Vice President De Castro, informed me that Mercury Drug had agreed to honor the 20-percent senior citizens' discount whether payment was in cash or credit card. The company would be sending out instructions to this effect to its different branches nationwide.

Two days ago, after allowing for some time to get the new arrangements in play, I decided to purchase my usual supply of medicines. To my great relief, my credit card was accepted with the 20-percent discount being granted—no hesitation, no questions asked.

Let us thank Carlos Manalastas for raising the issue last January, something we should have done even earlier.

Most of all, we thank Vice President De Castro for his prompt response, truly in the Ramon Magsaysay tradition of attending to the needs of our people who are up against some of the industry giants.

* * *

Rodrigo M. Profeta, barangay chair of Barangay 603 Manila, wrote to complain about a McDonald's food branch located at the SM Centerpoint. Apparently, this branch requires senior citizens to present not only a senior citizen ID card but also a BIR TIN card before granting them the 20-percent discount.

C'mon, George, say it isn't so! It is absurd to require a BIR TIN card for a taste of your delicious hamburgers.

* * *

Which brings me to another problem on retail transactions using credit cards, debit cards and automated teller machine cards.

Recently, Trade Secretary Peter Favila noted that a number of retailers have been charging differently on specific items, depending on the mode of payment. "Purchases using credit cards are priced higher than those paid with cash," he said.

Favila explained that under Department Administrative Order No. 10, "When the consumer opts to pay either through cash or card, he or she should pay only what is stated on the price tag. There should only be a single price tag indicating the cost of each item. The price tag should be inclusive of the value-added tax for items covered by VAT. It is unlawful to charge an additional tax over the price tag," Favila said.

It is time for consumers to be aware of these rules and regulations so as to protect themselves from unfair trade practices. It has been said that vigilance is the price we pay for freedom. It is also the price one pays for fair and lawful treatment from greedy business establishments.

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Protecting environment in honor of our women

THE ECOWASTE COALITION, AN ENVIRONMENTAL network on waste and pollution issues, lauds the Filipino women, especially our mothers, for their paramount role in mentoring us on wholesome ecological practices such as repairing, reusing and recycling our discards.

In the process of turning households into homes, our mothers have instilled in us life-sustaining values such as caring for our surroundings, doing more with fewer resources, cutting waste and even creating wealth from trash.

Above all, we thank our mothers for nourishing us with breast milk—the best and healthiest food for human babies that requires no packaging and causes no pollution.

As we celebrate the International Women's Day on March 8, we would like to call attention to the need to protect our women from chemicals that endanger their health and their capacity to bear, nurture and sustain life.

With thousands of chemicals being manufactured and traded globally, it has become "normal" to find toxics in cosmetic products, household cleaning materials, consumer goods, toys and, yes, in the air we breathe and in the food and water we consume.

Many of these chemicals are lipophilic, which means they lodge in the body's fat cells. As nature has endowed women's bodies with extra fat for their childbearing and breastfeeding functions, women tend to be more vulnerable to these chemicals.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

So invasive are these chemicals that babies are born tainted with assorted toxics. In 2005, the Environmental Working Group and Commonweal released a report showing an average of 200 industrial chemicals and contaminants—such as pesticides, consumer product ingredients, wastes from burning trash, gasoline and coal—in the umbilical cord blood of 10 babies born in US hospitals in 2004.

To honor our women and protect our children from harm, let us prevent and reduce the toxic contamination of our environment, which is caused by smoke-belching vehicles, dirty factories and products, horrendous dumps and incinerators, etc. Let us work together to eliminate human exposure to toxic hazards.

—ELSIE BRANDES-DE VEYRA,
treasurer, EcoWaste Coalition;
commissioner, National Commission
on the Role of Filipino Women,
c/o EcoWaste Coalition, Unit 320,
Eagle Court, 26 Matalino St., Quezon City

Candidates should pay for 'cleanup' operations

I WAS VERY DISAPPOINTED TO SEE THE Quiapo Bridge when I passed by it in the morning of Feb. 28. The entire cement portion of the bridge was covered with the campaign posters of a certain Pichay.

Question: If the candidates claim that their "supporters" posted their campaign materials without their knowledge, then why should we elect them? They can't even control or make a small number of supporters obey them. Or, maybe, the supporters did follow their candidates' instructions, after all.

Suggestions to the Commission on Elections and to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority:

1. Allow only the use of banners in certain designated areas. No more paper campaign materials.

2. Charge the candidates concerned for expenses incurred in removing illegally placed campaign materials. The public should not be made to foot the bill in cleaning up their mess.

3. Leave the trees alone.

—STEPHEN CO,
phen448@yahoo.com

So what must Filipinos do?

I HAVE TO THANK RETIRED Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban for his factual recall of the George W. Bush-Al Gore US presidential contest. (INQUIRER, 2/25/07) It brought to mind the laudable democratic system in the United States and, most of all, the magnanimous nationalism of an American politician in the person of Gore, a virtue that is totally lacking in our country.

But the question I would like to ask Panganiban is this: How does he want us, the people of this country, to react in the face of a usurped presidency continuously being imposed on the people by someone who has resorted to all illegal means she and her minions can devise, not only to cheat her way into the position but to hang on to it?

The surveys which say 60-65 percent of the people reject the present dispensation is way off the mark. Mingle with the crowd in the streets, and you'll know the bitter truth: more than 90 percent of the people so hate and abhor the present administration, except that they feel they cannot do anything about it.

Ah, Philippines, what grievous sin have you committed to suffer this fate?

—BENJAMIN L. SIM,
atozsim@yahoo.com

If US wants to stop extrajudicial killings

IF THE UNITED STATES IS TRULY sincere in helping the Philippines solve extrajudicial killings in the country, it can do so by:

1. Putting a stop to its "assistance" to the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Both UN special rapporteur Philip Alston and the Malacañang-created Melo Commission pointed to the AFP as among the suspects in the killings. Any "aid" provided by the US government will only be used to kill more activists and civilians.

2. Withholding its support for the Philippine government's Oplan Bantay Laya 2. Time and again, it has been pointed out that, contrary to what the AFP wants us to believe, the target of the government's all-out war policy is not the armed guerrillas but the unarmed members of legal organizations.

3. Removing the CPP-NPA-NDF and Jose Maria Sison from its list of foreign terrorists. Tagging them as terrorists merely aggravates the problem and continues to delay the peace process and the resumption of the GRP-NDF peace talks. The "terrorist" tag, as well as the AFP's continued labeling of progressive organizations as "communist fronts," only further emboldens the killers to go on with their killing spree.

History, though, has shown that these demands will fall on deaf ears. There is reason to believe that the United States is more than ignorant of the killings and that it may even have a hand in them. The killings have served to silence not only the critics of the President but also those of US-RP relations.

—RON VILLEGAS,
information officer,
League of Filipino Students,
10-C Speaker Perez St., QC

PRC fully addressed CGFNS concerns

THIS IS A REJOINDER TO THE letter of Fr. Jesus V. Dumaual. (INQUIRER, 2/27/07) Indeed, the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) should review its stand. Why, Father Dumaual explained it well. The licenses issued by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) are certificates of competence.

For a win-win solution, I suggest that the CGFNS require the June 2006 nursing board passers an additional one-year practice in the Philippines as a precondition for them to secure a VisaScreen certificate, should they wish to work in the United States.

Most of them are now employed and they are their families' breadwinners. To ask them to retake the equivalent of Tests 3 and 5 at this time, after many of them have applied for work in the United States, is unjust because the CGFNS does not differentiate between those who were involved in the cheating and those who were not.

The US health service has benefited from the services of the Filipino nurses it has engaged in the past many years. In fact, not only the United States but also many countries of the world have seen how good they are in their profession. And the PRC has been the one issuing the licenses that guaranteed their professional competence.

Besides, the curriculum in most nursing schools in the Philippines is based on the United States' nursing course syllabus and references. The CGFNS examination should be enough to measure the competence of a nurse-applicant.

In sum, I submit that the CGFNS will find that the PRC's resolution of the leakage crisis meets the CGFNS' standards.

—CONRADO MARAMAG,
1736 BF III,
Novaliches, Caloocan City

ANNOUNCEMENT

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
CIRCULAR NO. 34 - P

TO ALL SSS MEMBERS, EMPLOYERS AND PARTICIPATING FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

SUBJECT CONDONATION, RESTRUCTURING AND *DACION EN PAGO* PROGRAMS FOR DELINQUENT HOUSING LOAN BORROWERS

Hereunder are the guidelines for the Condonation, Restructuring and *Dacion En Pago* programs for delinquent housing loan borrowers, pursuant to Social Security Commission (SSC) Resolution No. 254-s.2006 dated 05 July 2006 and approved by the President of the Philippines on 30 September 2006.

I. WHO ARE QUALIFIED TO APPLY

1. Condonation, Restructuring and *Dacion En Pago* Programs:
   - a. Delinquent borrowers under the following Direct Housing Loan Programs:
     - a.1 Individual Housing Loan
     - a.2 Corporate Housing Loan
     - a.3 Repair and Improvement Housing Loan
     - a.4 SSS-NHA Apartment/Dormitory Housing Loan
     - a.5 SSS Employee Housing Loan
     - a.6 Sold Acquired Assets
   - b. Heirs of deceased borrowers under the Direct Housing Loan Programs with unpaid balance after application of MRI Proceeds.
   - c. Buyers of mortgaged property under the Direct Housing Loan Programs with Deed of Conditional Sale or Deed of Absolute Sale
2. Condonation but not Restructuring and *Dacion En Pago* Programs.
   - a. Delinquent borrowers under the Direct Housing Loan Facility for Trade Union Members (TUM) and Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW).
   - b. Delinquent borrowers whose properties have been foreclosed with registered Certificate of Sale but not yet transferred in the name of the SSS.
   - c. Delinquent borrowers of Participating Financial Institutions (PFIs) under receivership of Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation.
   - d. Employers who are delinquent in remittance of their employees' housing loan amortizations under the SSS Corporate Housing Loan Program and Direct Individual Housing Loan Program.
   - e. PFIs who are delinquent in the remittance of SSS member-borrowers' housing loan amortizations under the Pari-Passu Loan Program and mortgaged properties located at Cherry Hills Subdivision in Antipolo.

II. WHAT ARE THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Availment period is from December 15, 2006 to June 15, 2007.
2. Deadline for payment, signing of Supplemental Mortgage Contract/*Dacion En* Pago and filing of application is on June 15, 2007.
3. For Condonation Program:
   - a. A minimum amount of Five Thousand Pesos (Php5,000) shall be paid upon availment of the condonation program. If the amount of the arrears is less than Php5,000, the borrower may still qualify for the condonation program provided he pays in full the principal, interest and collectible continuing interest (CI).
   - b. The amount of penalty and CI to be condoned is equivalent to the amount paid. The maximum amount to be condoned shall be 100% of the penalty and 50% of CI as of payment date. The other 50% of the CI is collectible from the borrower.

     If the total obligation (Principal, Interest, 50% collectible CI) is fully paid, all penalties and 50% of the CI are fully condoned.

Example: Statement of Account as of Sept. 30, 2006:

Principal	Php	50,000
Interest	Php	30,000
CI	Php	90,000
Penalty	Php	100,000
Condonable CI	Php	45,000
Condonable Penalty	Php	100,000

In the above example, supposing the borrower paid Php10,000 to avail of the condonation, the application of the payment will be as follows:

Amount Payable

Principal	Php	50,000
Interest		30,000
CI		45,000
Total	Php	125,000
Less: Payment		10,000
Balance	Php	115,000

Amount Condonable

Condonable CI	Php	45,000
Condonable Penalty		100,000
Total	Php	145,000
Less: Amount Condoned		(10,000)
Balance	Php	135,000

If the Php115,000 balance is fully paid within the six-month condonation period, the condonable balance of Php135,000 shall be fully condoned.

4. For Restructuring Program:
   - a. Loan restructuring shall be allowed after the availment of the condonation program.
   - b. The restructured amount shall be the sum of the outstanding principal balance, accrued interests, collectible portion of CI, insurance premiums and foreclosure expenses excluding penalty and condonable CI.
   - c. The restructured loan shall be subject to the following fixed interest rates:

Amount	Interest Rate (per annum)
Php300,000 and below	9%
Php300,001 up to Php500,000	10%
Php500,001 and above	11%

   - d. The restructured term may be extended up to a period of ten (10) years, provided it is not longer than the original loan term and the sum of the restructured term plus the borrower's age shall not exceed 70.
   - e. Any unpaid amortization after the due date shall be subject to a penalty of one and one-half percent (1 ½%) per month until fully paid.
   - f. The remaining CI and penalties shall continue to be condoned, provided the borrower is not delinquent. A borrower becomes delinquent if he fails to pay an equivalent of six (6) months' amortizations.

     If the borrower becomes delinquent, the remaining penalties and condonable portion of the CI shall form part of the total outstanding obligation, which shall be due and demandable.
   - g. In case of death of the borrower, the account may be assumed by either:
     - Any relative within the first civil degree by consanguinity (i.e. parents, children) or affinity (i.e. parent-in-law, son/daughter in-law); or
     - Buyers of the mortgaged property with Deed of Conditional Sale or Deed of Absolute Sale.
5. For *Dacion En Pago*
   - a. The borrower may be allowed to continue occupying the property provided he executes a Lease Contract or Lease Purchase Agreement.
   - b. The former owner/successor-in-interest/lawful occupant may repurchase the property as provided for under SSC Resolution No. 417 s. 2002 (Policy Guidelines for the Disposal of SSS Acquired Assets).
6. A borrower who pays within the availment period is eligible to participate in the Homeowners' Assistance Program

WHAT ARE THE MECHANICS OF THE HOMEOWNERS' ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HAP)

- a. The HAP is open to both delinquent and currently paying housing loan borrowers
- b. Twenty (20) HAP prizes at Php20,000 each shall be raffled off to borrowers who will pay within the condonation period.
- c. A delinquent borrower who availed of the program is entitled to one (1) computer- generated raffle entry for every Php5,000 payment while those currently paying will be entitled to one (1) computer-generated raffle entry for every Php1,000 payment.
- d. A borrower shall only win once.
- e. If the borrower wins, the prize money shall be applied to his loan balance, if any. Any excess shall be paid to the borrower.
- f. SSS employee-borrowers are disqualified to participate in the raffle draw.

III. HOW TO AVAIL OF THE PROGRAMS

1. Individual Members
   - a. The borrower shall accomplish the Application for Condonation, Restructuring and *Dacion en Pago* Programs and indicate the type of program he wants to participate in.
   - b. The borrower shall be issued an acknowledgement stub, which shall serve as proof of participation in the Condonation and Restructuring Programs.
   - c. Condonation
     - c.1 Upon presentation of the acknowledgement stub, the Statement of Account (SA), List of Posted Payments (LPP) and Real Estate Payment Return Form (REL-9) stamped "With Application for Condonation of Penalty" will be issued to the borrower.
     - c.2 The payable amount maybe paid at one time or in installments at the option of the borrower at the nearest SSS branch with tellering facility or SSS accredited banks and payment facilities.
   - d. Restructuring

     The borrower and spouse (if married), authorized representative, legal heirs, or buyers of mortgaged property shall be required to execute a Supplemental Mortgage Contract/Assumption of Mortgage/Supplemental Deed of Conditional Sale and the corresponding promissory note.
   - *e. Dacion En Pago*

     The borrower shall execute the following:

     Notarized Affidavit of Offer to *Dacion*
     Dacion *En Pago* Agreement (signed by both the borrower and spouse, if married).
     Lease *Contract* or Lease-Purchase Agreement (if the borrower opts to rent the *property*)
2. Employers/PFIs

   The employer/PFI shall submit the application form together with the collection list of borrowers and proof of payment to the nearest SSS branch.

Please be guided accordingly.

CORAZON S. DE LA PAZ
President and CEO

Approved by:

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

THELMO Y. CUNANAN
Chairman

20 December 2006

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Cop chief sacked, but 'jueteng' persists

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—EVEN THE IMPENDING relief of the provincial police director here did not deter gambling lords from reviving jueteng in the province, which entered its second week of operations following almost two months of stoppage.

Bet collections for the illegal lottery continued in various towns here despite reports that the revived operations had again caused the relief of Nueva Vizcaya's top police official, supposedly for the police's failure to prevent the return of illegal gambling activities.

It was the first time in the province that jueteng activities did not stop simultaneously with the relief of the police director, bolstering public perception here that local officials enjoyed full control of illegal gambling operations in their areas.

The illegal numbers game here and in other provinces in Cagayan Valley also continued to thrive despite the relief last month of Chief Supt. Jefferson Soriano as regional police director.

Police sources earlier blamed the incumbent officials' preparations for the May 14 local elections, with jueteng *payola* purported to be their main source of campaign funds.

"[The continued operation of jueteng] is a clear indication that local officials, not the police, have the final say on whether or not illegal gambling should exist in an area," said a source familiar with the operations of the game here.

He cited an incumbent local official here who has reportedly been distributing funds to residents and various giveaway items using funds supposedly coming from bribes from jueteng financiers.

"You'd expect the spending spree to become more intense as the campaign draws near. The politicians don't mind; it is not their money anyway," the source said.

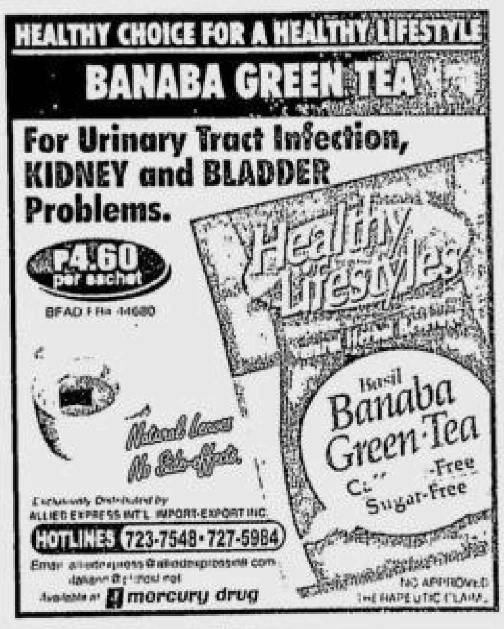
Senior Supt. Cesar Javier, outgoing Nueva Vizcaya police director, on Sunday said jueteng operators were taking advantage of his relief from his post, which was announced as early as last week.

Javier, however, belied speculations that his relief was due to his perceived failure to stop the revival of jueteng operations here.

"Gov. [Luisa] Cuaresma did not accept [my nomination] as the next police director so [the Philippine National Police headquarters] sent her a new set of [nominees]. It was my time to leave as I have been overstaying as [officer-in-charge]," he said.

He said Senior Supt. Segundo Duran, who was the governor's personal choice, would take over as police director here today.

Javier clarified that even as he was preparing to leave, he had instructed chiefs of police to conduct anti-illegal gambling operations in their areas. *Melvin Gascon, Inquirer Northern Luzon*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20 nabbed in Eastern Visayas for violations of gun ban law

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—ABOUT 20 PEOPLE, including an Army sergeant, have been arrested in Eastern Visayas since the imposition of gun ban last Jan. 14.

Regional police director Chief Supt. Eliseo de la Paz said the arrest of these people proved that the law enforcers in the region are serious in their drive to check the proliferation of loose and unlicensed firearms.

"We don't take into consideration the position of the person arrested. Otherwise, our campaign on gun ban related to the forthcoming elections would be a failure," De la Paz said.

De la Paz identified the arrested Army sergeant as Segundo Sevillano, who was found to have in his possession a .45 caliber pistol at a checkpoint in Calbayog City last Jan. 14.

When he was arrested, Sevillano failed to show any documents showing he was exempted from the gun ban, De la Paz said.

The police charged the Army sergeant and the 19 other arrested civilians were charged of illegal possession of firearms, in violation of the Commission on Elections Resolution 7764.

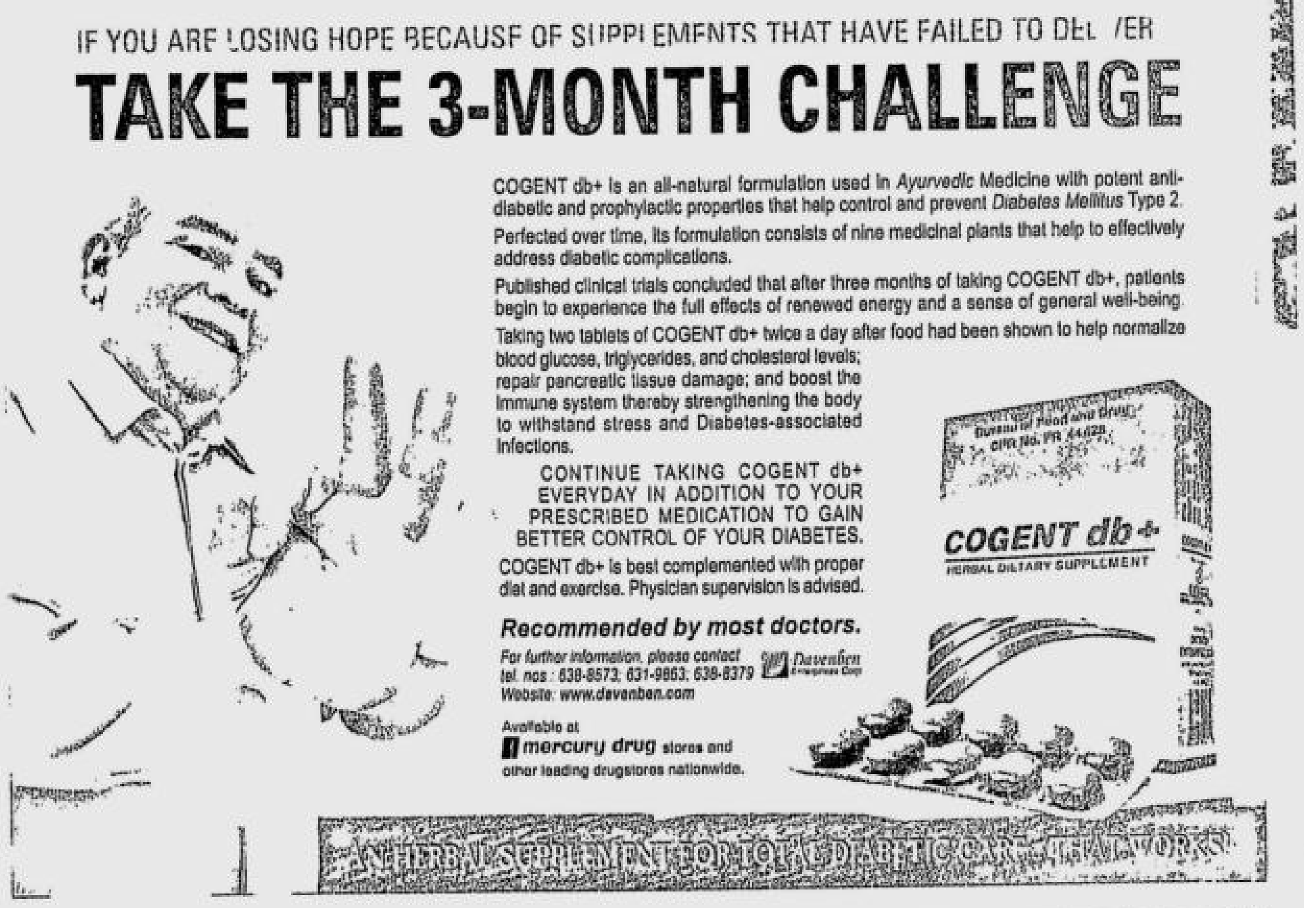
Of the 20 people arrested, nine came from Leyte while 11 came from Samar, which the police identified as an area of concern in the May elections.

De la Paz said the police would apprehend more people for violating the gun ban, particularly in Samar. He noted that the province has a "history" of proliferation of loose firearms especially during the election period.

However, De la Paz said the police remain on top of the situation so he would not recommend that any area in the region, including Samar, be placed under Comelec control and supervision.

Since the election season began, several killings have occurred in Samar, some involving elected officials.

Daram Mayor Benito Astorga was gunned down Jan. 25 while attending a village fiesta. Town Councilor Vivencio Yantos of San Jose de Buan was killed Feb. 19. On Feb.6, Vice Mayor Francisco Langi Sr. of Motiong escaped an attempt on his life.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German football players visit Ifugao rice terraces

BAGUIO CITY—OFFICIALS AND reporters here were expecting young members of the German national football team that placed third in the 2006 Fifa World Cup but instead saw aging men alighting from the plane that brought them to this summer capital on Thursday.

These men, whose ages are now between 70 and 80, were players of the 124-year-old Hertha Football Club based in Berlin that won the German championship finals in 1930 and 1931, the reporters found out.

The team arrived at the Loakan Airport to begin a two-day goodwill trek to the Cordillera that would take them to the world-famous Ifugao rice terraces, a 10-hour travel from here.

"The retired players are traveling around the world to help the poor," Salvacion Letuli, the group's German-speaking Filipino tour guide, said. "They had just visited Vietnam before coming to the Philippines."

Otto Hoehne, 80, the leader of the team, said they played with the Philippine football team in 1978 in a friendly match at the Rizal memorial football field in Manila. The Germans won that game, 5-1.

"There were about 30,000 people who watched the game," Hoehne said through an interpreter.

The Hertha Football Club, according to its website, was formed on July 25, 1892 in Berlin by brothers Fritz and Max Linder and Otto and Willi Lorenz.

In 1905, Hertha won the first Berlin championship finals. The team gained popularity in 1910 when they beat the Southern United, an English club, in a match in Berlin.

The club was devastated in two world wars. In World War I, the club lost 36 members.

During World War II, Adolf Hitler embedded Hans Pfeifer, a Nazi member, as the new president of Hertha to ensure the club's loyalty to the German rule. Allied Forces disbanded the club when Hitler's regime fell.

In 1950, Hertha was formed again.

When the Hertha members arrived here on Thursday, they gave away toys to 62 pre-school children who were on a field trip to the airport.

"They love Filipino children," Letuli said.

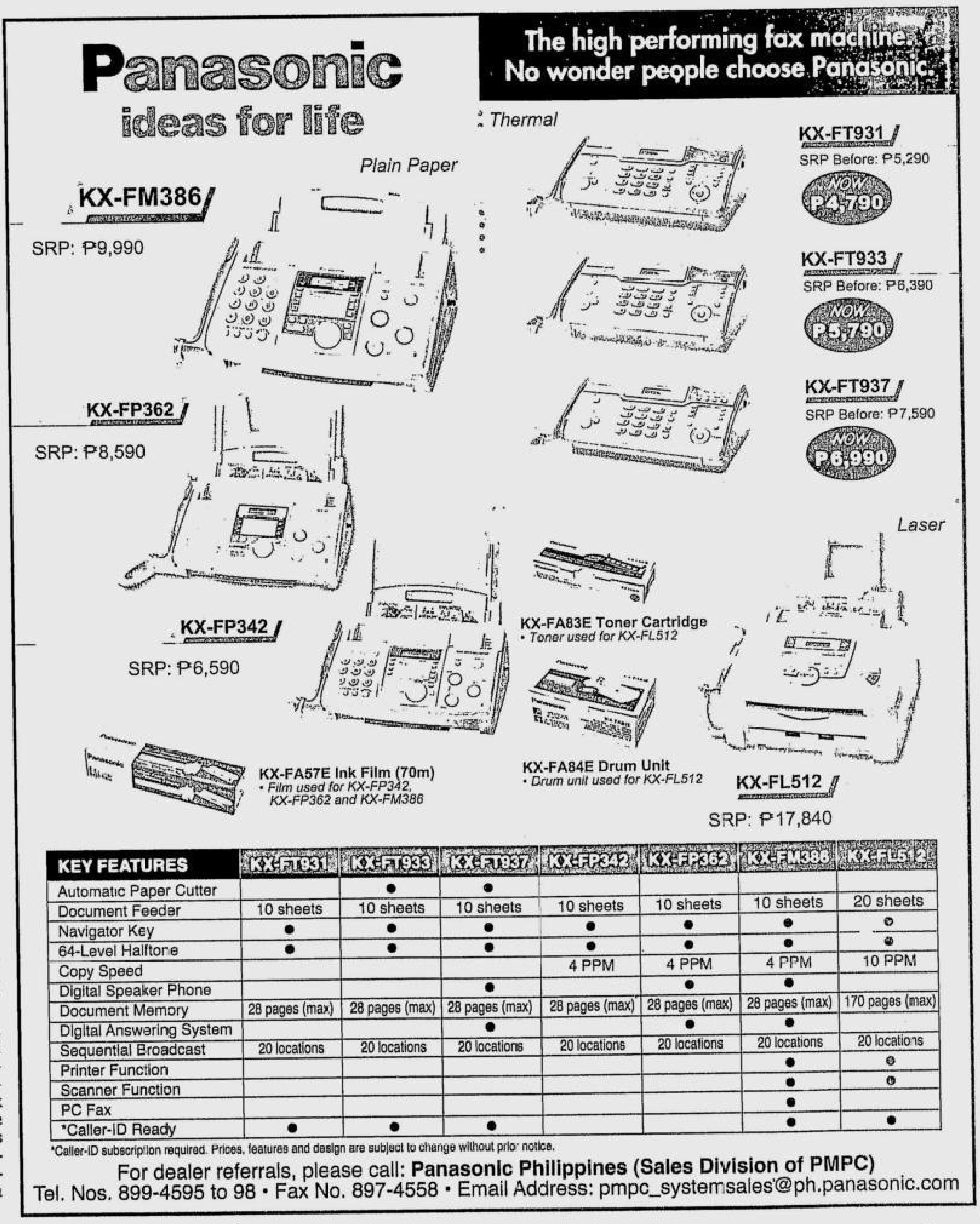
Immediately after entertaining the children, the team headed to Banaue in Ifugao, where they distributed uniforms to students of the Bangaan Elementary School there. *Elmer Kristian Dauigoy, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Month-long reunion for Alaminos folk

ALAMINOS CITY—THIS CITY will hold a month-long grand reunion for Alaminos residents presently based abroad. The "Visit to Hundred Islands 2007: Hundred Islands, Hundred Reasons" will coincide with the Hundred Islands annual global homecoming and fiesta celebration on March 11-19, in honor of its patron saint, St. Joseph.

The occasion is expected to gather Pangasinenses following the invitation extended by Mayor Hernani Braganza during his business trips abroad to promote the Hundred Islands and open its doors to potential investors.

Braganza said the occasion will "foster partnership and camaraderie with Pangasinenses in bringing the Hundred Islands National Park back to the days of being one of the best tourist destinations in the world." *Gabriel Cardiñoza and Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*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Samar mayor, son face arrest for slay

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—A TOWN MAYOR WHO IS facing murder charges in Samar province is believed to be on the run after a Regional Trial Court issued a warrant of arrest against him.

Mayor Joseph Grey of San Jorge has ceased to report to his office since Judge Roberto Navidad, presiding officer of the Regional Trial Court-Branch 38 based in Calbayog City, issued the warrant on Feb. 20.

The court, which did not recommend bail, also issued a warrant against the mayor's son, Francis, a Peter Doe and a John Doe for the crime.

One Leah Diocton, of Barangay Mancol of the same town, accused Grey and the three others of killing her husband Rolando on Oct. 3, 2006. The victim was killed by motorcycle-riding armed men, alleged to be Grey's hit men.

Grey could not be contacted for comment.

Regional police director Chief Supt. Eliseo de la Paz said he had ordered a manhunt to enforce the warrants of arrest.

Jovito Lacaba, provincial director of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, named Vice Mayor Marcelina Uy acting mayor effective Feb. 26. Councilor Vicente Cajurao was named acting vice mayor.

San Jorge is a fourth-class municipality (annual income: P13 million-P21 million) of over 30,000 people spread in 41 villages. It is 148 kilometers from this city.

Uy issued an appeal to Grey to face the case filed against him. "He should come out in the open if he is not guilty so that he can clear his name," she told the INQUIRER.

FIREMEN train their hoses on burning houses at Barangay Tinago in Cebu City, hours after the launching of Fire Safety Month.

JUNJIE MENDOZA/CEBU DAILY NEWS

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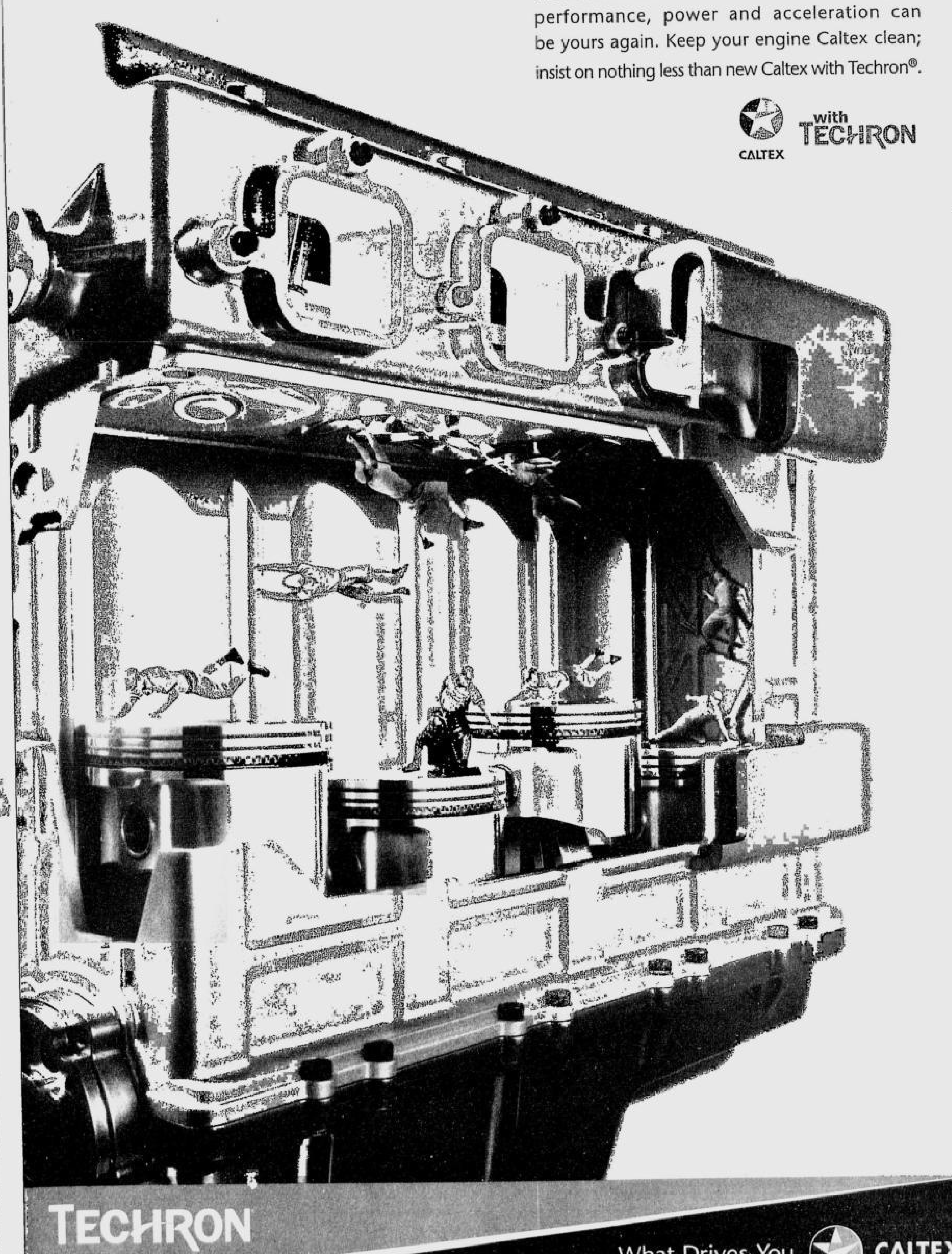

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Fire official becomes victim after Fire Safety Month launch

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—WHEN THE CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT chief investigator joined other officials in launching the Fire Safety Month celebration on Thursday, he did not know that he would become a fire victim in less than 24 hours.

A fire that broke out shortly after midnight on Friday gutted the house of SFO3 Allan Arciaga and 36 other houses in Barangay Tinago.

Arciaga said it was heartbreaking to see his house burning when he was one of those who, only hours earlier, had urged the public to be vigilant against fire this March, being Fire Safety Month.

Arciaga said he woke up past midnight and found his house and those of his neighbors on fire. He said the fire spread so fast he only had time to lead his wife, children and his parents out of their house.

Being a fireman, he tried to help his neighbors control the fire.

"It was very unfortunate. While I have to secure my family, I could not also abandon my responsibility to the public," Arciaga said in Cebuano.

The house of city fire marshal Supt. Esmael Codilla was also in the same neighborhood, but it was spared from the fire.

Codilla said his house was just three houses away from the fire scene and he was thankful that it did not reach their house. Still, his wife and children had to be evacuated because his house was in total disarray.

"Now, we can be considered as examples in our own fire prevention campaign," he sadly noted.

The fire started around 12:18 a.m. at the chapel of the Universal Church of Christ, which is occupied by the pastor, Dominador Mag-usara, 71, and his wife Luz.

Fire investigators believed that the fire was caused by a defective ceiling fan used by the couple.

Luz, however, said she did not use the ceiling fan. She instead insinuated that the fire was intentionally set off because some people, whom she refused to identify, had wanted them to leave.

Codilla said Luz's claim would be investigated.

He pegged damage at P800,000. Four persons, including FO2 Ramon Molina, were slightly injured in the hour-long fire, he said.

At least 70 families were provided with tents as temporary shelters at the fire site by the city social welfare office. They were also given food supply good for three days by the city government.

2 soldiers dead in Davao clash

DAVAO CITY—TWO GOVERNMENT SOLDIERS died in a clash with communist guerrillas in Barangay Eden in Toril District here on Wednesday morning.

Another soldier was also killed by the rebels in Davao Oriental on Monday morning.

The incident in Toril happened while the soldiers of the 73rd Infantry Battalion were responding to a tip from a resident about the presence of New People's Army rebels in the area.

Lt. Col. Rolando Jose Bautista, spokesperson of the 10th Infantry Division, said the soldiers were fired upon by the rebels while they were on a very difficult terrain.

"By fire maneuver and supported by attack helicopters, they assaulted the rebels, disregarding the volume of fire facing them. The troops were able to seize the enemy position, forcing the latter to withdraw northwest direction of the encounter site," Bautista said.

A government soldier was also killed while four others were wounded in the clash with NPA rebels in Sitio Bandira, Barangay Caningag in Caraga, Davao Oriental.

Bautista said the government troops, under the 6th Infantry Battalion, were on their way to raid a rebel camp when they encountered the communists led by a certain Commander Ryan. *Jeffrey Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao*

'Tagaytay 5' allowed to 'go out' of jail

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—WITH their frail bodies feeling the brunt of their detention and indefinite hunger strike that they launched last week, five farmers arrested for being alleged communist rebels were finally allowed to briefly go out of their cell to exercise and enjoy the sunlight.

On Thursday, members of the base police unit agreed to let the so-called "Tagaytay 5" do some stretching exercises outside of their 25-square-meter jail.

The order allowing Riel Custodio, Axel Pinpin, Michael Masayes, Rico Ybañez and Aris Sarmiento to go out of their cell came from Calabarzon police director Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan Jr., who had earlier declared that they would abide by the recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights regarding the rights of the five as prisoners.

Among the CHR recommendations was to let the five prisoners go sunning.

Although still reeling from weakness, Pinpin said he and the other prisoners were happy that the police allowed them to step out of their detention area even for a while.

Pinpin said that while Radovan's decision was long delayed, it somehow enlivened their spirits.

It was the second time in five days that the police permitted the five to temporarily leave their cell.

At around 8 a.m. Sunday, Custodio, Pinpin, Sarmiento and Masayes were allowed to walk around the grandstand park inside the camp.

Ybañez, who is suffering from hypertension, stayed outside the office of the base police unit.

After one and a half hours, they were again brought inside.

Pinpin said Calabarzon police officials had also set a regular schedule of when they could go out of their cell to exercise.

They said they would be allowed every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday to enjoy their sunning rights.

The police have also painted the walls of the jail.

The INQUIRER tried to talk with Radovan but a member of his staff said he was on a meeting.

Sarmiento said the camp doctors had allowed them to exercise their rights to choose their doctors.

He said physicians from the Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD) visited them recently and informed them of their health conditions.

"The HEAD doctors said anyone of us might collapse as our health continue to deteriorate," said Pinpin, who has been complaining of low blood pressure.

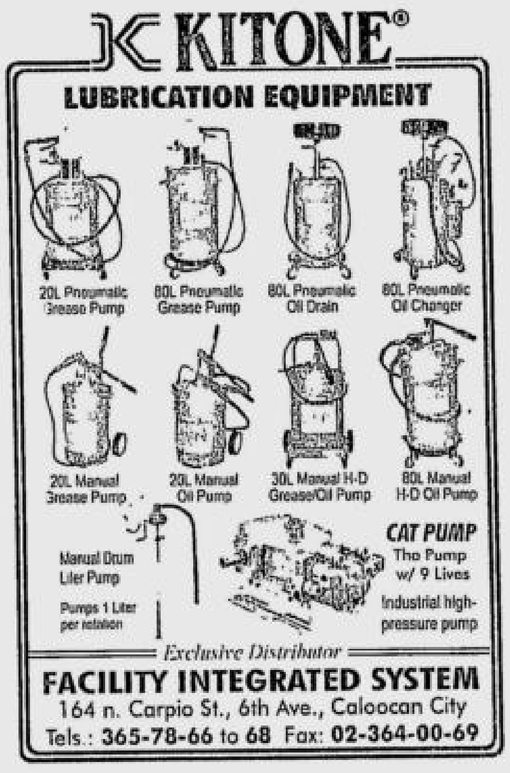
Pinpin clarified their stand on the plan of the Calabarzon police to ask the court for their immediate transfer to the Custodial Center of the Philippine National Police in Camp Crame.

He said all his group was asking was for Radovan and his personnel to respect the detainees' rights.

"General Radovan is missing the point. The issue here is not our clamor to be transferred. What we want is for the police to respect our rights. He himself can decide on our demands. If only they respect what is inscribed in our laws," he said.

Despite the signs of goodwill from the police, the members will continue with their hunger strike until they are permanently released from jail, he said.

"Ultimately, what we want is our freedom and to clear our names," Pinpin said. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*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Cagayan cops under fire as case vs Chinese drags

TUGUEGARAO CITY—POLICEMEN IN SANTA Ana town in Cagayan province came under fire due to their supposed poor handling of the killing of a driver allegedly by a Chinese businessman inside the online casino complex of the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (Ceza) on Feb. 25.

Believing that there was foul play in the shooting, friends and relatives of the victim, Romy Mabunga, an employee of Eastern H Casino, criticized the alleged "slow" action by the police in filing charges against the suspects.

"The police should not stop at what they were told by Ceza security forces. If there is really no attempt at a whitewash here, there must be an independent investigation of the case," said a government employee, who is Mabunga's friend.

The Ceza Complex in Barangay Centro in Santa Ana has been operating as an online gaming facility through the power given to the agency to operate Internet-based casinos and other forms of gaming without the need of a permit from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), the government agency tasked with operating and maintaining gambling pools in the country.

No proper consultation

Residents earlier opposed the operation of the casinos, saying these were conceptualized without proper consultations with local communities.

The criticisms came even as police officials in Santa Ana said they had readied murder charges against the Chinese businessman and a Filipino security aide.

Sta. Ana police chief Senior Insp. Franklin Tagupa said one Antong Chai, said to be a Metro Manila-based casino agent, and security guard Edgardo Wage were facing criminal charges for Mabunga's death.

Easter H Casino is reportedly one of the firms licensed by First Cagayan Leisure and Resort Corp. (FCLRC) to operate as an online casino, located within the Ceza Complex in the coastal town.

Citing a police investigation report, Tagupa said Mabunga's killing was "accidental." He, however, would not say which companies Chai and Wage worked for.

The victim, Tagupa said, was shot after he tried to pacify the suspects as they grappled over a 9-mm pistol following a brawl between two groups of Chinese nationals inside the Ceza Complex at around 9:45 p.m. on Feb. 25.

"We still do not know who between the two suspects actually shot the victim, so we are filing charges against both of them," he said.

Not convinced

The victim's friends in Santa Ana, however, were not convinced.

"We believe that the Chinese suspect was allowed to escape, owing to his vast influence and close connections with high-ranking Ceza officials," said another government employee.

But Tagupa dismissed the statement, saying the suspect had left when the police arrived at the crime scene.

"We cannot launch a manhunt because no warrant of arrest has been issued yet," he said.

Melvin Gascon, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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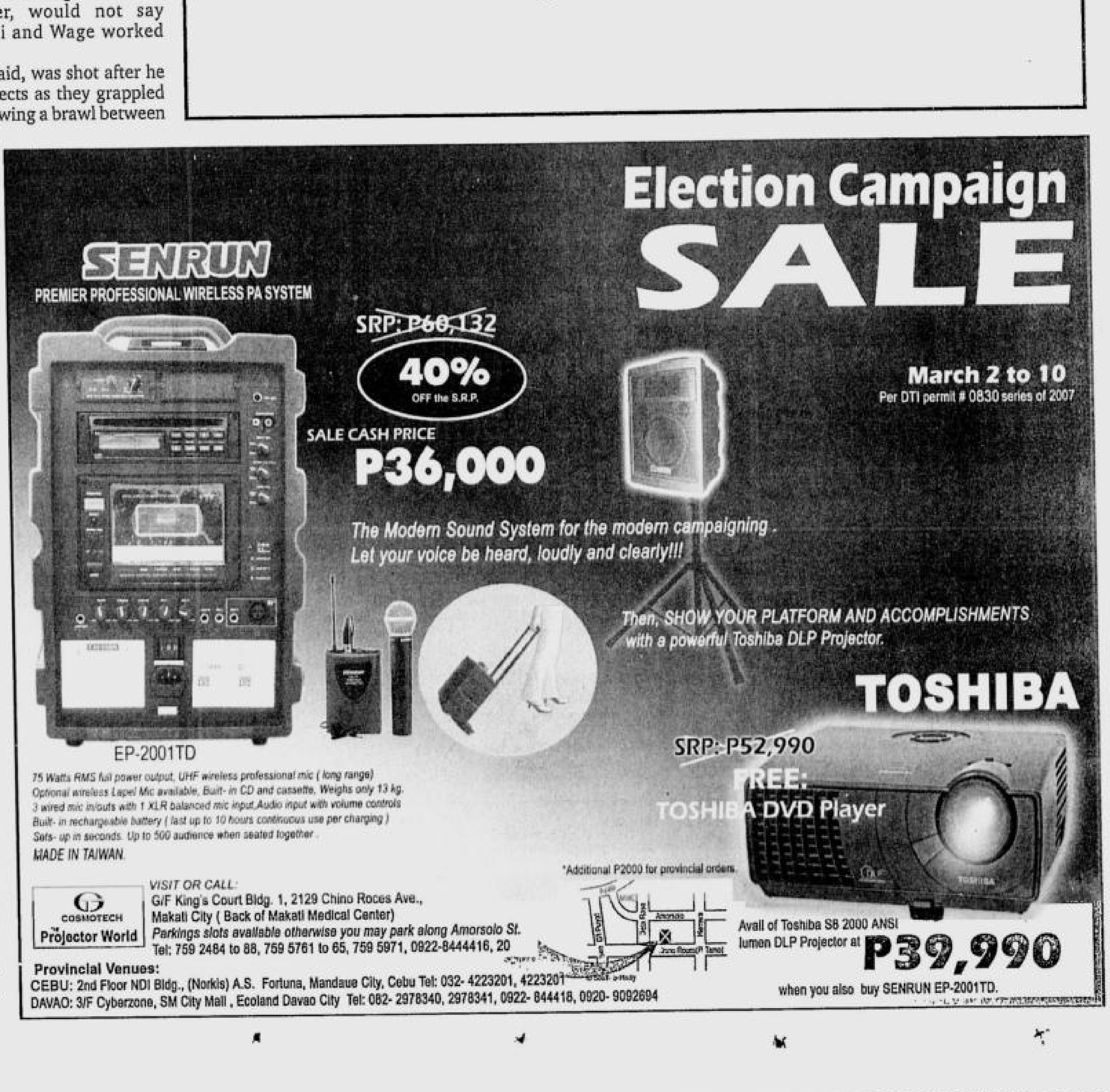
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26 Albay villages lahar 'high-risk' areas–Phivolcs

LEGAZPI CITY—THE HAZARD MAP OF MAYon Volcano is expected to change significantly as 26 villages in three towns in Albay have been identified as high-risk areas by a team of government geologists and volcanologists.

Alex Baloloy, science research analyst of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) in Bicol, defined high-risk areas as those that face great threat from volcanic hazards such as lahar.

Many of these villages were not high-risk areas until mudflows from the volcano swamped them at the height of Supertyphoon "Reming," according to the risk assessment study conducted by the team in December last year.

The four villages declared "high-risk" or highly prone to lahar were Pawa, Bogtong, Padang and Bigaa.

Daraga town in Albay has nine villages identified as high-risk: Malabog, Pandan, Budiao, Busay, Malobago, Culiat, Kilicao, Bongalon, Binitayan.

In Guinobatan, the villages of Masarawag, Maipon, Tandarora, and Maninila were identified as "high-risk" after it was "affected by deposition" by "Reming."

Masarawag and Maninila, which are both eight kilometers away from the crater, were only "moderately prone" to lahar before the mudflows on Nov. 30 last year.

In Camalig town, the formerly "moderately prone" villages of Tumpa, Sua, Tibobran, and Quirangay were now declared high-risk.

High-risk villages in Sto. Domingo town were San Isidro, San Antonio, Fidel Surtida, and Lidong.

Legazpi City, Daraga, Guinobatan, Camalig and Sto. Domingo towns are all located in the southeast quadrant of Mayon where the crater rim is lowest, making it the pathway or depository of volcanic debris ejected from the crater.

Safety

The high-risk villages should be a no man's land but it would take an "expensive" massive relocation to attain it, Baloloy said.

To date, about 3,000 families still live in 18 evacuation centers from a high 20,000 families displaced by "Reming." Some of the evacuees have been moved to transit shelters in tent cities, the Department of Social Welfare and Development reported.

Gov. Fernando Gonzales said the provincial government had been moving the evacuees to transit centers where they would be temporarily housed while waiting for permanent houses being built in relocation sites by government and nongovernment institutions.

Gonzales said his office had been careful in identifying relocation sites to ensure that it was safe and in the best interest of the displaced victims.

The final results of the Phivolcs study by a 10-member team of volcanologists and geologists have not yet been made public.

Baloloy said the study analyzed the mudflow resulting from "Reming" and was expected to reveal changes in the hazard map and other inputs to help disaster officials prepare for future emergencies.

With the thick deposit of volcanic debris that remain on Mayon's slopes, Baloloy said the possibility of another lahar flow with the next heavy rains was always there.

Lahar flowed in Albay in 1984, which affected Padang in this city and Lidong in Sto. Domingo.

Another lahar flow occurred in 1981 which affected Mabinit in this city.

Last year's lahar, which left over 1,000 people dead or missing, resulted in devastation in almost the same extent as what happened in 1814 when Cagsawa town was buried.

All that was left standing was the town's church belfry.

Mayon's alert status has remained at level 1 due to crater glow at night and some volcanic earthquakes resulting from the breaking of rocks and ascent of magma in the 2,461-meter volcano, Baloloy said.

Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon

A BULLDOZER of the Department of Public Works and Highways dredges a river of sand and boulders brought down by Supertyphoon "Reming" on Barangay San Raphael, Guinobatan, Albay.

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

50 volunteers participate in Operation Smile

DAVAO CITY—OPERATION SMILE Philippines has started its 10-day, multi-site international mission in four major cities in the country in line with its 25th year anniversary in November.

"This international mission signals the start of our year-long anniversary celebration," Roberto Manzano, Operation Smile Philippines board of trustee, told local reporters.

Manzano said close to 50 volunteers, 15 of them international volunteers, were taking part in the mission in this city alone.

At the Davao Medical Center (DMC), where the mission for cleft palates was to be conducted, at least 498 patients lined up to be served.

Dr. Michelle Aportadera, one of the volunteer reconstructive surgeons, said patients were coming in from as far as Malungon in Sarangani Province, Compostela Valley, and Magsaysay in Davao del Sur.

"In Davao City alone, the mission has treated 2,694 children for the past 11 years. We are hoping to treat more than 600 children in the next five days including those in the cities of Naga, Cebu and Bacolod," he said.

Manzano said Operation Smile, the world's largest private organization, had served more than 18,000 Filipinos since 1982.

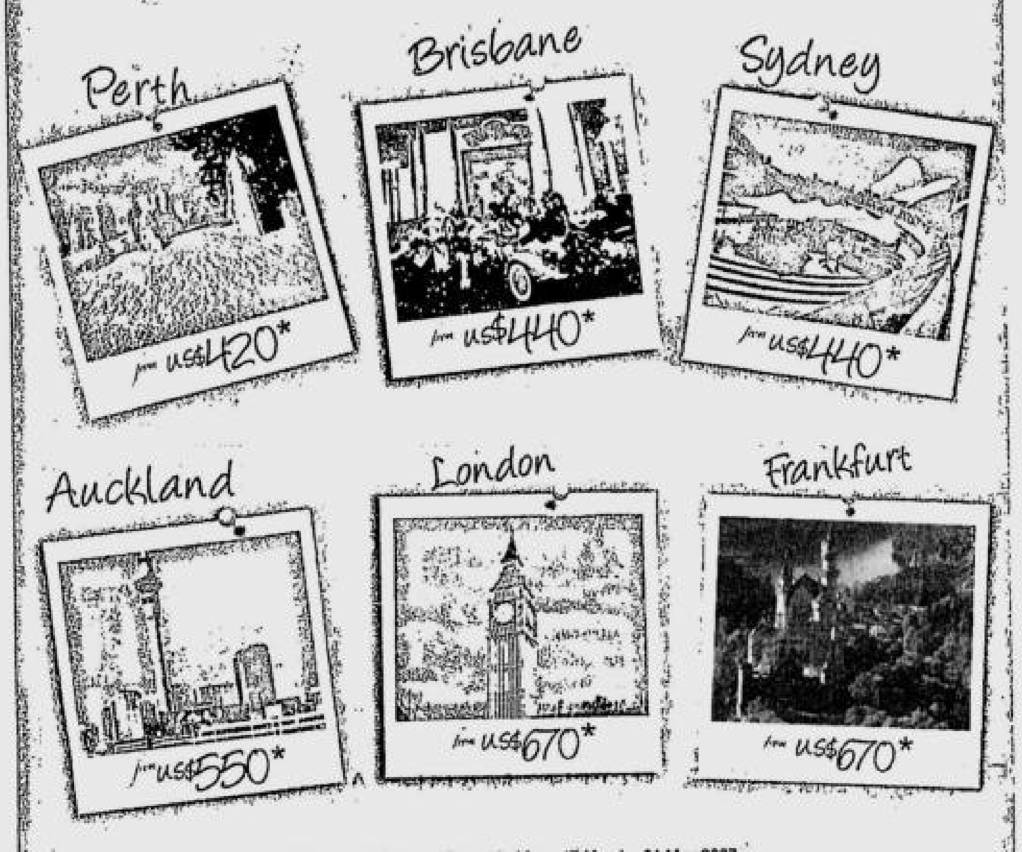
"Operation Smile Philippines hopes to do 22 missions and we hope to treat 2,000 to 2,500 children with deformities for this year," he said.

Manzano said their group "is not all about surgery (alone)."

He said it also provided complete health care services for children and adults with physical deformities.

Joselle dR. Badilla, Inquirer Mindanao

Early Hop to Summer



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Manila Water Service Upgrade in MAKATI CITY

Manila Water will conduct service improvement project in MAKATI CITY which will cause temporary water supply interruption.

Schedule: 10:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 6 to 6:00 a.m, Wednesday, March 7, 2007
Areas Affected:
- East Rembo
- Comembo
- 21st Street
- Pembo
Activity: Upgrading of Fort Boni Pump Station (Installation of 750mm BFV & 750 x 600 tee for suction inlet)

We therefore advise all affected residents to store enough water for their needs during the interruption.

For updates, please call our Customer Service Hotline at 1627.

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Manila Water

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(PDI – Mar. 5, 2007)

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AFPSLAI Grants P100 M Loan Rebates

The Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association, Inc. (AFPSLAI), as a non-stock savings and loan association, has always stood ground in its objective of relieving member-borrowers the burden of repayment. This is the reason why for the past years, AFPSLAI has been giving loan rebates and reduction in interest rates.

It has always been AFPSLAI's commitment to give back to its loyal members their fare share of the earnings after satisfying all its obligations at the end of the calendar year. This is good news for all members who have maintained good credit standing with the Association because AFPSLAI has released P100 M worth of salary loan rebates to qualified borrowers starting February 13, 2007.

Member-borrowers whose loan and interest payments are regular and updated during the past year are entitled to receive rebates. Members who have lapses in payment or understated remittances may also be considered for rebates provided that the total amount of lapses/understatement as of year-end shall not exceed the amount equivalent to one (1) monthly amortization. Borrowers with past due accounts settled within the year shall also be considered.

Loan rebates will be credited to the borrower's CCA or savings account, except for retiring members with outstanding loan balances at the time of the granting of loan rebates. Instead, the amount shall be automatically credited to their respective loan accounts to avoid payment to those who still have liabilities with the Association.

TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Mayor Jessie B. Castillo
Bacoor, Cavite

What if you have a high ranking politician campaigning for his candidate telling everybody that the PNP and COMELEC "atin yan di' tayo papatalo"?

What if you see this politician roaming around town with his dozens of heavily armed bodyguards presumably with no COMELEC exemptions at all and offering money and projects to entice supporters?

What if they use PNP personnel in recruiting Barangay Captains with ready cash offers?

What if you see a blatant display of use of public funds from national government and its agencies such as the PCSO for campaign?

What if you are receiving gifts such as bullet or telephone calls or text messages of death threats to you and your family?

What if your wife while on her way home, you will overhear thru a civilian PNP radio "andyan na si mayora, ambushin na yan"?

What if some PNP officers are always in association with this high ranking elected official promising them legislative influence in the pursuit of their careers?

What if you see all these previously assigned PNP personnel in your area which you have requested to be re-assigned or whose assignment was refused here are now being mobilized and perhaps planning to be reinstated now in this very crucial time?

What will you do and how will you react most especially when the lives of your family are at stake?

In this election period, tension are high and every move is contemplated to be politically motivated, thus, the need for more open discussion with the authorities such as the DILG, PNP and COMELEC. There is a need to clarify all gray areas of the law relative to this election period, in ORDER TO COME UP WITH A FREE AND HONEST ELECTION.

The crisis that transpired in Bacoor was based on the calculated plan and course of action which resulted from the aforementioned factual circumstances and on the following, to wit:

1.- THERE SHOULD BE NO REPETITION ON WHAT HAPPENED IN THE 2001 ELECTIONS.

1.1.- Two weeks before the 2001 elections, the local police force were shuffled and a new Chief of Police was installed under the guise of an Officer-in-Charge, this was made with no clearance from the COMELEC as mandatorily requirement under the law as well as the necessity that the local chief executive has the prerogative to choose from among the three (3) nominees for the chief of police;

1.2.- That in 2001, four (4) Armored Personnel Carriers (APC) were seen roaming the municipality and in fact some were stationed in the municipal hall and public elementary schools;

1.3.- The employment of discharged PNP men from the WPD, housed in Lotus Motel in Bacoor who conducted visitations on houses of civilians and attempting to hold and delay the delivery of ballot boxes for canvass;

1.4.- That during the campaign period all civilians who attended our meetings and rallies were subjected to checkpoints;

I am trying to exhaust all legal remedies available but the "do and implement now" while you howl protest leaves you no ground but to do something to be heard.

- As per provisions of the law, specifically the Local Government Code, the minimum requirements for the LGU's is simply to provide a site where national agencies of the National Government may hold office. In Bacoor, we provided the PNP not only seven (7) stations for its offices but also municipal vehicles, motorcycles and even gasoline allowance and other supplies and equipments which is more than the minimum requirement of the law. These were not donated to the PNP but simply given for its temporary use, thus there are Memorandum Receipts for every properties provided to it. OWNERSHIP OVER THESE PROPERTIES REMAINED TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF BACOOR.

- I informed the DILG and the PNP hierarchy of the dilemma but got no reply. I even informed them that I will block any attempt to shuffle the Bacoor PNP which is not in accordance with the law, but instead I got a message that they will force their entry should I prevent their ingress to the building. Thus I asserted my authority by closing only one (1) of the seven (7) stations, about six o'clock in the evening of February 7, 2007, but we prepared for any untoward incidents that may arise should criminals and dissidents take advantage of the situation.

- Together with some members of the Sangguniang Bayan and then Acting Governor of Cavite, Jonvic Remulla we stayed in the police station, and in fact we together with all PNP personnel present were in a jovial mood and ready at all time against opportunistic elements. FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE PUBLIC ALL THE OTHER SIX (6) PNP STATIONS IN BACOOR WERE OPEN AND ARE FUNCTIONING.

- Media people came in and statements were made, meeting with the PNP Regional Director was scheduled ten o'clock in the morning of February 8, 2007, ALAS, we were heard.

- In a meeting the next day, Director Salumbides of the DILG also arrived reportedly upon instructions of the NAPOLCOM for the purpose of conducting an investigation. During the brief talk, he was able to hear portions of a recorded statement of a high ranking politician, "KANYA NAANG PNP", and upon hearing the same Dir. Salumbides said that the same was devastating.

- Present in the 10:30 am meeting were, Regional Director of the PNP, Gen. Radovan, Provincial Director Posadas and Gov. Jonvic Remulla, herein, we discussed all the issues at hand and I agreed to return the use of the building as well as all the vehicles and equipments back to the PNP on the pretext that they will adhere to all the provisions of the law relative to the movement of PNP personnel in Bacoor. Immediately after our meeting the padlocked building and all the vehicles were made available for the use of the PNP.

- THEREAFTER, WE BOTH MADE AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT TO THE MEDIA THAT EVERYTHING IS BACK TO NORMAL. But later in the evening of February 8, 2007, we received a resolution from the NAPOLCOM WITHDRAWING OUR DEPUTATION OVER THE LOCAL POLICE IN OUR MUNICIPALITY without again hearing our side, in gross violation of our fundamental right to due process enshrined and guaranteed by no less than the Constitution.

I did not do these for personal interest nor to defend my chief of police or the PNP men of Bacoor but this were dictated by the principle that WE SHOULD ALL ADHERE TO THE LAW on the movement of PNP personnel during election period without COMELEC clearance which is oftentimes violated and abused in the guise of designation of an OFFICER-IN-CHARGE. All we want is to BE HEARD.

What I did was simply to invoke our power under the law as CUSTODIAN of all municipal properties including the all buildings owned by the municipality.

NOW, I thought I will be heard, but instead, our police deputation was revoked, thus, the more they can do anything they want in the assignment of PNP personnel, defeating the principle of civilian rule over the police/military.

Currently, our supporters are all getting text messages from some PNP personnel that they NOW control Bacoor and that they should now join them with their candidate.

I NOW SEEK THE HELP OF THE PEOPLE AND ALL THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF ALL THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS OF THE COUNTRY TO UNDERSTAND MY SITUATION BEFORE JUDGING MY ACT.

FOR THE RECORD, FROM NOW ON, IF THERE IS ANYTHING THAT HAPPENS TO ME AND MY FAMILY AND EVEN MY SUPPORTERS, I SHALL HOLD THEM RESPONSIBLE.

. . . . AND TO THE COMELEC, there can never be a FREE and HONEST ELECTION in Bacoor under these circumstances, Thus, we seek your help to put us among the areas of concern of your office and provide us support from the elite group of the Philippine Marines in order to make the May 14, 2007 elections CREDIBLE AND PEACEFUL.

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10 commandments for responsible candidacy

THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES WERE RELEASED YESTERDAY BY the Church-based Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting:

1. Run for public office because you want to serve the people and have the competence for the position you are running for.
2. Obey all laws of the Comelec.
3. Campaign on issues, platform and program of government that will address the needs of the people.
4. Do not promise anything you cannot keep.
5. Do not attack the honor and dignity of your opponent.
6. Do not buy votes.
7. Do not use any form of violence.
8. Do not cheat in the counting of votes.
9. Accept defeat with dignity and be noble in victory.
10. Swear to God from the depth of your soul that once in power you will serve with utmost dedication and put the good of the country above all else.

... for responsible voting

1. Vote according to the dictates of your conscience.
2. Respect the decision of others in choosing their candidates.
3. Seek to know the moral integrity, capabilities and other personal qualities of the candidates you will vote for.
4. Strive to understand the issues, platform and programs of candidates and parties seeking your vote.
5. Do not sell your vote.
6. Do not vote for candidates using guns, goons and gold.
7. Do not vote for candidates with records of graft and corruption, and human rights violation.
8. Do not vote for candidates just because of "*utang na loob* (debt of gratitude)," personal appearance, popularity, or *pakikisama* (camaraderie).
9. Do not vote for candidates living an immoral life.
10. Put the welfare of the country above all else in choosing the candidate you will vote for.

Mayors push for Vilma

From page A1

no longer run for governor to give way to her brother-in-law, outgoing Vice Gov. Ricky Recto, who is bent on running against reelectionist Gov. Armando Sanchez.

She was apparently trying to calm tensions created by rival gubernatorial ambitions within the family.

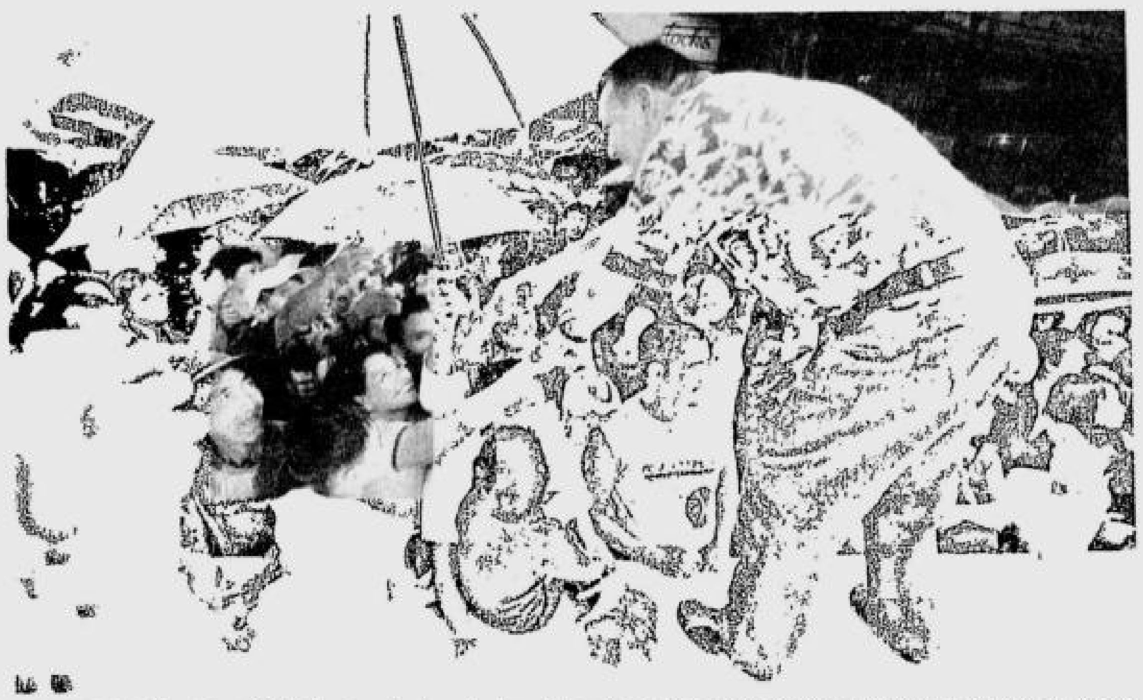
The matter of who would run between Santos and Ricky Recto for the post of governor has highlighted the prickly relationship between the vice governor and his younger brother, Sen. Ralph Recto, who had predicted that his wife would handily beat Sanchez.

Political dynasties

The issue has also thrown into focus the problem of political dynasties in the country. The problem has endured despite a ban on it in the Constitution because of the absence of a law implementing such a ban.

Citing surveys pointing to a Santos victory over Sanchez, the church official said that appeared to be the predominant sentiment of the people in the province.

"It's no secret here that only Vilma can beat the incumbent governor," he told the INQUIRER yesterday.



BATANGAS Vice Gov. Ricky Recto, who has declared he will run for governor of the province against incumbent Gov. Armando Sanchez, shakes hands with supporters during an opposition rally in Batangas City. ROGER MARGALLO

Clergy also rooting

He noted that surveys had suggested that put together, the votes for Ricky Recto, Sanchez and Nestor Sanares, another possible candidate, would be no match to those for Santos for governor.

Among the clergy in Batangas, many were also quietly rooting for the actress supposedly because of her "clean" record in public office, according to the church official.

"For the good of Batangas, Recto should withdraw and just allow his sister-in-law to run and beat the governor," said the official.

In a press conference more than two months ago, Ricky Recto admitted that Santos had better chances of winning against Sanchez. But he insisted that he would make a better governor.

Malacañang watching

"I will admit that she's a better candidate in terms of 'winnability.' But in terms of governance … I've been vice governor for 12 years. I know the ins and outs of all the four corners of Batangas," he told reporters.

Ricky Recto suggested that Santos instead run for Congress and represent the fourth district of Batangas.

Malacañang has kept its hands off the family row, at least on the surface.

Last week, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who is from Batangas, declined to be drawn into the fray, saying: "I have no control over the political personalities" in the province.

Ermita denied Ricky Recto's allegation that he was backing Santos' candidacy, saying, "I'm just waiting for developments."

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.
WELCOME

MAYNILAD MANAGEMENT AND RANK-AND-FILE UNION REACH QUICK AGREEMENT. A new Collective Bargaining Agreement between Maynilad Water Services Inc. and its rank-and-file union, Maynilad Water and Sewerage Union-PTGWO, was quickly reached and signed last March 2, 2007, in a development that reflected the support and trust of the 1,700-strong union for the new management of Maynilad, the DMCI-MPIC consortium. Shown all smiles after the signing of the CBA are: Maynilad president Fiorello Estuar (third from left) shaking hands with MWSU president Lucia Magno; (from extreme left) Labor undersecretary Romeo Lagman; Maynilad directors Jose Ma. Lim (MPIC president) and Isidro Consunji (DMCI Holdings president); and PTGWO national president and SSS commissioner Victor Balais. Among the benefits in the CBA are: a pay increase of P1,850 starting January 1, 2007, another pay increase of P1,950 starting January 1, 2008, a P5,000 signing bonus, and additional P100 rice and meal allowance per month for the next two years; an additional P2,000 in their Dependents' Hospitalization Subsidy, an increase of P1,000 in the Mid-Year Financial Assistance for year 2007 and another P1,000 for year 2008, and the payment of residual benefits.

Advt

Business groups ...

From page A1

than the function room of a luxury hotel.

"Our main concern is to prevent a repeat of the last three years where Congress was distracted from its main duty of legislation by numerous investigations. We want to see who among the candidates are serious in pushing for the national interest when they are voted into office," Chua said.

In a statement, Sen. Manuel Roxas II welcomed the move of the Commission on Elections and the business community to organize public debates to raise the level of political discourse during the campaign.

Public forum

Roxas, chair of the Senate committees on economic affairs and trade and commerce, said the senatorial candidates needed a well-publicized responsible public forum to air their views on a broad range of issues, specifically the proposals to implement a second wave of tax reforms, the ratification of the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement, and amendments to the Labor Code.

Roxas said a key concern of the public was the intent of the Arroyo administration, as declared by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, to implement new tax measures to sustain the current fiscal momentum.

"The public deserves to know the candidates' stand on how to sustain fiscal reforms and whether they support the idea of new tax legislation, including a recurring proposal to tax text messages," Roxas added.

Catholic bishops also support the debate, saying this will give the electorate a chance to get to know who they would be voting for.

"What is important is for the political parties to reveal and explain their respective platforms of government," said Iloilo Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, also president of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

The debate was sparked by a challenge hurled by Presidential Chief of Staff Joey Salceda at the opposition to a public discourse on the economic performance of the Arroyo administration after GO came out with paid advertisements in several newspapers claiming the economy was in worse shape than during the term of detained President Joseph Estrada.

The ad, titled "So the People May Know: The Real Score on GMA's Economic Performance or Why the Nation is Worse off than in January 2001," said that the economic gains under the Arroyo administration did not reach the majority of Filipinos.

The opposition initially accepted Salceda's challenge but wanted the debate held at the Plaza Miranda to enable more people to watch and hear the candidates.

But Team Unity spokesperson Joseph "Ace" Durano said that GO could not claim that the debates would be inaccessible because it would be fully covered by television, radio and newspapers.

Team Unity candidates took swipes at their rivals for backing out of the debate.

Senatorial bet Luis "Chavit" Singson said this showed that the opposition was only good at "heckling from the gallery" because they did not have an alternative program to the President's economic strategy.

Senatorial candidate Michael Defensor said the preference for Plaza Miranda was just a lame excuse to cover up for GO's strategy of hurling mud at the administration and just wait if anything stuck.

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Erap flays Team Unity 'spin masters'

By Jocelyn R. Uy and Norman Bordadora

IF THE GENUINE OPPOSITION appears to be off to a lethargic start, it's all the administration Team Unity's fault, says ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Speaking by telephone from Tanay, Rizal, where he is detained on plunder charges, Estrada said yesterday that the perception that GO had a "weak organization" was a result of work done by administration "spin masters."

Estrada said the campaigning had just begun and it was understandable the opposition would encounter some "hitches" in its campaign sorties.

The opposition had to cancel two rallies on Panay Island following "threats" that could put people's lives at risk. But the administration's Team Unity said GO was simply losing grassroots support.

"That's what they say," said Estrada. "Everywhere they (opposition candidates) go, they are widely accepted by the public," Estrada told the INQUIRER.

However, he said that his being locked up in Tanay was one of the opposition's disadvantages.

In a comment submitted to the court opposing Estrada's plea to be transferred to his residence in San Juan, Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said that Estrada did not have to personally engage his candidates' opponents in a debate.

"The candidates of his party should not depend or ride on his popularity but on their own competence, qualifications and popularity," Villa-Ignacio said.

Also yesterday, Estrada's son, San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito, said GO would hold fewer rallies but make more radio and television appearances. He made the announcement in the wake of the canceled rallies in Western Visayas last week.

"I've always said that it was a media war. From the start we already knew that. It was the locals who wanted the rallies," said Ejercito, who will turn over his post as campaign manager to outgoing Sen. Sergio Osmeña III.

Ejercito had earlier said he would organize "town hall" meetings with sectoral and community leaders to hear complaints and issues "directly from the people." He denied it was a copy of Team Unity's "Pulong Sulong" dialogues with local officials.

"No, we've been telling the media about our plans to have community forums as early as the start of the campaign. It's just being drowned out by all the other issues," Ejercito said.

"We've also conducted consultations in the community as early as last year. We're just re-introducing them in the campaign."

Ejercito would not say if the opposition's local leaders did a bad job of mobilizing the people for GO's rallies and motorcades.

"They said there was a security threat locally. Let's just leave it at that. We've been talking about Iloilo for a week now," Ejercito said.

GO readies experts team to counter poll cheating

By Dona Pazzibugan

LEARNING FROM THE "HELLO Garci" scandal that marred the 2004 election, the Genuine Opposition is putting up a "powerhouse" team of legal experts and poll practitioners to counter any cheating in the May 14 senatorial elections.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, a leader of the GO coalition, said most of the opposition funds and efforts were intended to bolster their anti-election fraud team.

"The priority of our expenses will go to anti-cheating," he said.

"Our antifraud committee will be a powerhouse team," GO campaign spokesperson Adel Tamano told the INQUIRER recently.

He said the team would be made up of retired justices, former Commission on Election officials and other legal experts.

Binay said the media's vigilance would be a big help in preventing cheating.

He said candidates would also benefit from having copies of the election returns posted in public places.

"There are a lot of people with cell phones, so anyone with a cell phone can transmit that," he said. "This is how we'll cope with the lack of funding."

ABS-CBN: More money by 'simple arithmetic'

From page A1

date would spend the average amount of P50 million, the total would be P500 million with just 10 candidates," Osorio said.

Under the Fair Election Act of 2001, an independent senatorial candidate and a political party can spend P5 for each registered voter. A senatorial candidate on the ticket of a political party can shell out P3 for every voter.

Given that there were 43,817,985 registered voters as of last month, a senatorial candidate affiliated with a party can spend P131.45 million for his or her campaign. An independent senatorial candidate can spend as much as P219.09 million.

KBP appeal

Osorio said it was too early in the game to project earnings from political ads. The 90-day campaign period for senatorial candidates began on Feb. 13.

"It's pretty difficult to come out with a projected or indicative figure, especially since there is still an appeal from the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas (KBP) to amend the Commission on Elections rule limiting political advertisements on TV and radio," Osorio said.

He pointed out that the KBP had asked the Comelec to revert back to the 2004 ruling.

In 2004, the rule was that each candidate would be allowed 120 minutes per TV and 180 minutes per radio station. This year, a senatorial candidate is allowed only 120 minutes of campaign ads to be divided among all TV stations, and another 180 minutes for all radio stations.

This was confirmed by KBP chair Jun Nicdao, who said that the group had sought a dialogue with Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos.

Nicdao said the KBP was advised to draft a position paper on the issue.

"We've sent three letters so far. We've been informed that our request is now being studied by the Comelec's legal affairs department," he said.

The KBP expects the Comelec to come out with its decision this week.

Two options

Nicdao said at least two options were being considered.

"Instead of an aggregate limit, the cap will be imposed in terms of 'per candidate and per broadcast area' or 'per candidate and per region.' According to KBP rules, Mega Manila (Metro Manila and suburbs) is a broadcast area; Ilocos Norte is another broadcast area; Ilocos Sur, another broadcast area," he said.

Osorio said the rationale behind the KBP appeal was not only to pump up a network's earnings.

"The purpose is to have a more informed electorate. To allow the candidates to inform the public about their credentials and platforms. The current Comelec ruling limits the public's opportunity to make a more informed choice," he said.

Osorio said that even non-KBP members would benefit from the appeal because it would apply to all TV networks, not just KBP members. GMA 7 is not a KBP member.

Considerably higher

Although Osorio acknowledged that the campaign period could spell huge earnings for TV networks, the total figure would still depend on other factors, apart from the Comelec ruling.

"If the KBP appeal is granted, the projected income from campaign ads could become considerably higher. But then again, we can't really predict how the candidates would allocate their campaign funds and divide their 120 minutes," he said.

Before joining ABS-CBN, Osorio was president of Capri, the advocacy and PR affiliate of the advertising company Campaigns and Grey.

30-percent discount

Although ABS-CBN hesitated to provide projected earnings from political ads, the network's Corporate Communications office sent via e-mail its rate card for political ads.

"Political ads are discounted 30 percent compared to regular ads," Osorio said.

The regular rate for prime time shows is P301,133 for a 30-second ad.

For prime time shows like the nightly news show "TV Patrol" and weekly programs like "Sharon" and "Maalaala Mo Kaya," political ads cost P183,299 per 30 seconds. Or roughly P6,000 per second.

For weekend noontime show "A.S.A.P. '07," the rate is P119,977 and for the afternoon show biz talk show, "The Buzz," P109,424.

For dzMM, ABS-CBN's AM radio station, ad rates for political ads range from P13,910 to P17,900 per 30 seconds.

For dwRR, ABS-CBN's FM radio station, political ad rates range from P2,490 to P3,980 per 30 seconds.

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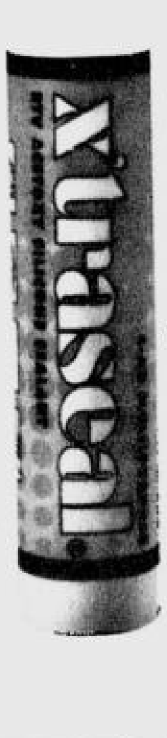

GMA network to earn P500M from candidates

From page A1

than the other networks, and this is working in our favor," Gozon said.

"So candidates, who have a limited time to get their message across, prefer to place their ads in higher rating shows for greater impact. This is certainly working in our favor," he said.

GMA 7 has a 71-percent share of non-cable households in Mega Manila, even if ABS-CBN continues to enjoy a bigger audience share in the provinces.

Bulk of ad spending

Leah Nuyda, the network's vice president for sales, said the P500 million in projected sales from political ads represented the bulk of total ad spend for the whole campaign period of 13 weeks for senatorial candidates.

"The phenomenon now is that most of these ads are placed through multinational advertising agencies, so the buying trend is scientific, assuring the clients maximum reach for their advertising," she said.

The Fair Elections Act, or Republic Act No. 9006, sets the guidelines for the use of broadcast and print advertising by the candidates.

120 minutes for TV ads

Under the act, senatorial candidates are allowed a maximum of 120 minutes of TV ads and 180 minutes of radio ads.

An independent senatorial candidate and a political party can spend P5 for each registered voter. A senatorial candidate on the slate of a political party can shell out P3 for every voter.

As of February, the Commission on Elections counted 43,817,985 registered voters. So a senatorial candidate affiliated with a party can spend P131.45 million for his or her campaign while an independent senatorial candidate can shell out as much as P219.09 million.

Standardized ad rates

Advertising rates have also been standardized by the Comelec.

Ad rates used for political ads for TV have been pegged at 30 percent lower than the ad rates of a year ago, and 20 percent lower for radio, according to Nuyda.

A 30-second TV ad on prime time over GMA 7 goes for P252,000, Nuyda said. The rate varies depending on the time slot, and could go as low as P30,000 for a 30-second spot.

Radio spots cheaper

Radio spots cost considerably less—from as low as P600 for a 30-second plug in provincial stations to as high as P30,000 for Mega Manila stations.

So far, senatorial candidate Prospero Pichay is the biggest spender in terms of media buys.

Pichay spent P33.4 million on TV placements in the first two weeks of the campaign, according to Nielsen Media Research Philippines.

Reelectionist Senators Manuel Villar and Ralph Recto spent P30.29 million and P22.79 million, respectively, according to Nielsen.

Credibility

But more important than higher rating programs is the credibility that GMA 7 has built among the viewers, said Gozon, referring to the network's news and public affairs programs.

"Nobody would watch our shows if we're not credible," he said.

In a trade show held last Thursday by GMA Network at All Nations at The Fort in Taguig, Gozon made a pitch for the network's election coverage dubbed "Eleksyon 2007."

He told advertising agencies that Eleksyon 2007 was the most comprehensive and most credible election coverage in the country.

"The 2007 elections are a turning point," Gozon said in his opening remarks.

He said that while the electoral exercise would not solve the country's ills, it should be a springboard for much-needed reforms.

"Here, the role of mass media becomes critical. But even then, the responsibility of providing information to empower voters to decide through the ballot lies not only with those who make programming choices. It also lies with the viewers and, to a large extent, with those of you who sustain the lifeblood of the industry," he said.

GMA Network has partnered with the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, Newsbreak, The Catholic Media Network, AMA Education System, Smart Communications and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. for Eleksyon 2007.

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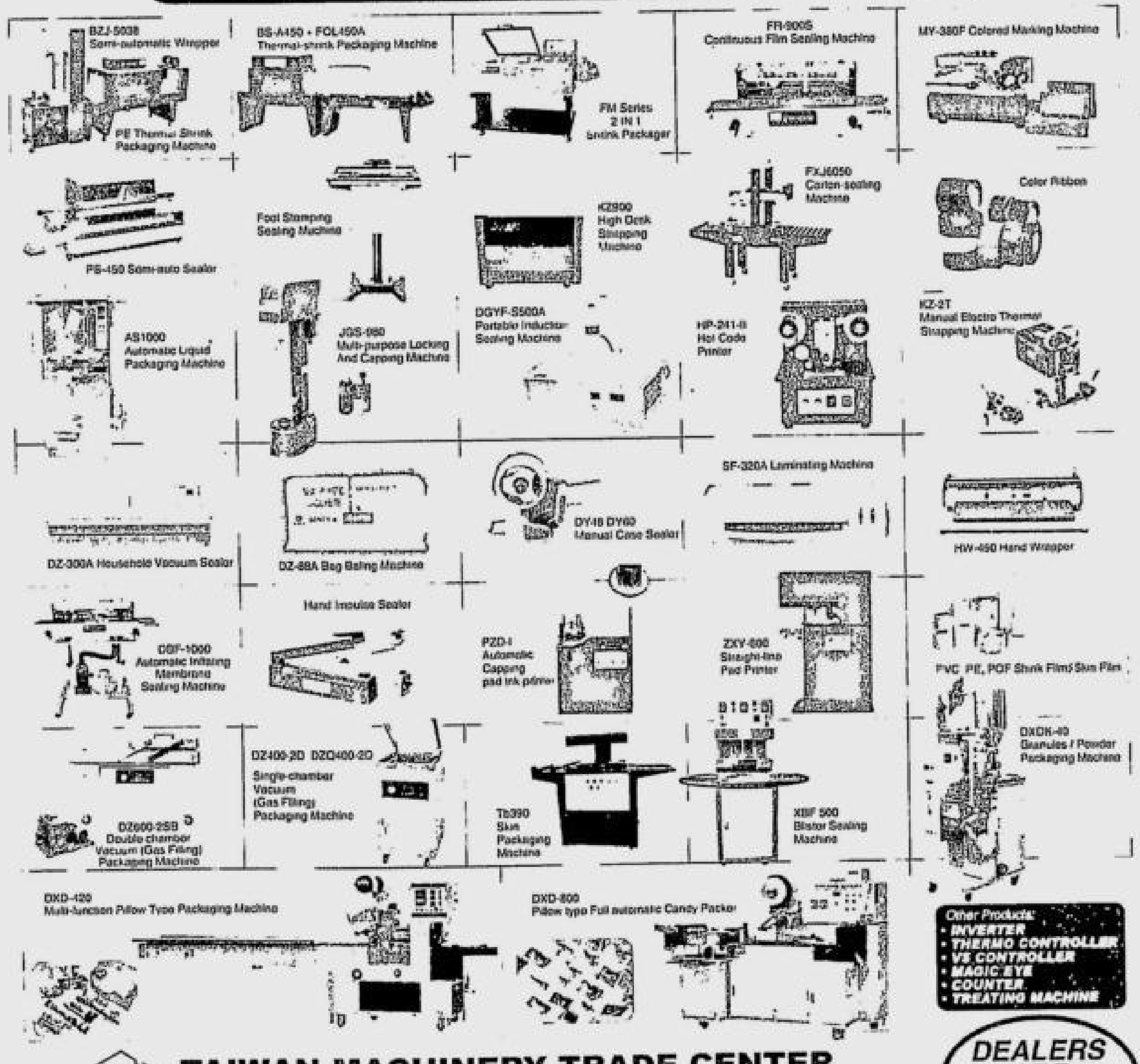
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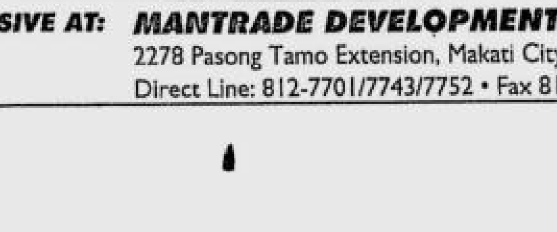

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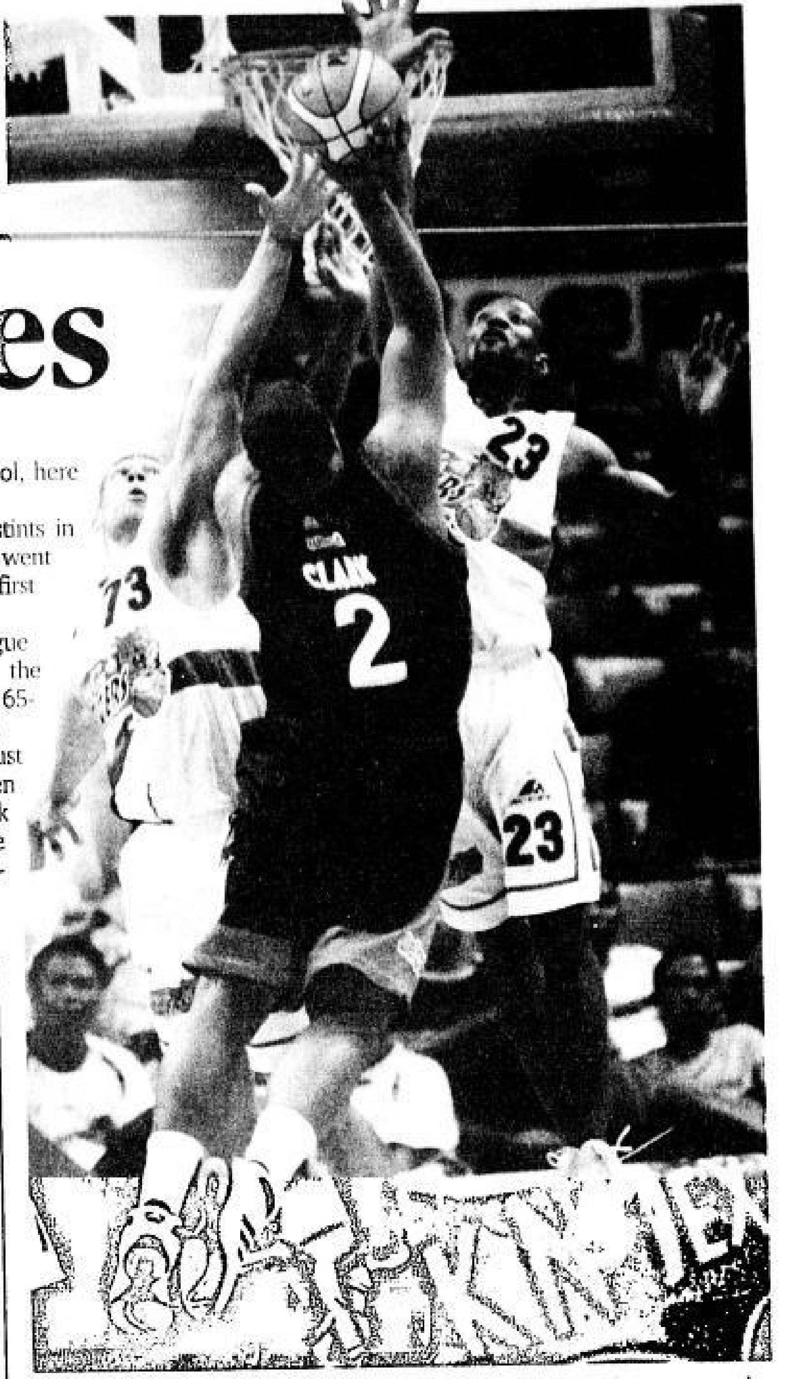


CHARLES Clark, Welcoat's beefy import, tries to take it strong to the hoop against the Coca-Cola frontline duo of Ali Peek (left) and Anthony Johnson (right). EDWIN BACASMAS

Barako, Tigers spank foes

GAMES WEDNESDAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:35 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs Air21
7:20 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Alaska

By Musong R. Castillo

JAMES PENNY DID A LOT OF INTANGIBLES aside from scoring 23 points to lead defending champion Red Bull to a 98-88 decision of Purefoods last night in the Talk 'N Text Fiesta Cup at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Penny scored 13 in the second period while also finishing with 13 rebounds, four assists, two steals and four blocks in a brilliant start to his return stint.

"He played as expected," coach Yeng Guiao said. "I'm hoping to get far in this tournament."

Cyrus Baguio added 17 points and Junthy Valenzuela 15 for the Barako, while James Yap, despite troubles in his marriage, scattered 28 points to pace the Giants, the runners-up here last year.

Purefoods import Jesse King finished with 24 markers, but was hobbled in the second half because of foul trouble.

Anthony Johnson scored 29 points and John Arigo added 18 in the curtain-raiser to lead Coca-Cola to an 81-79 victory over Welcoat.

The reed-thin import scored 12 points in the final period after the Tigers had lost an 18-point first half lead as Coca-Cola got its campaign here off on the right foot.

"This game is an indication that nothing will come easy for us," Coca-Cola coach Binky Pavis said. "Just when we thought that we had control, here comes Welcoat making life hard for us."

A seasoned overseas campaigner with stints in Chile, Finland and Mexico, Johnson actually went scoreless in the third after tossing 17 in the first half, slowed down somewhat by early fouls.

And that was when the Dragons, the league newcomers who finished dead-last in the Philippine Cup, spewed fire, even leading, 65-64, after a Jay-R Reyes layup with 6:22 left.

Reyes led the Dragons with 25 points, just one shy of his career-high. He also had seven rebounds. Johnson buckled down to work and saved the day for the Tigers, who are playing for the first time in two years outside of the San Miguel Corp. umbrella.

The scores

First Game

COCA-COLA 81—Johnson 29, Arigo 18, Peek 17, Antonio 8, Avenido 3, Miranda 2, Misolas 2, Tolomia 2.

WELCOAT 79—Reyes 25, Clark 16, Lopez 13, Compton 12, Ibañes 5, Baguion 2, Cabatu 2, Sta Maria 2, Wainwright 2.

Quarters: 20-8, 40-25, 57-54, 81-79.

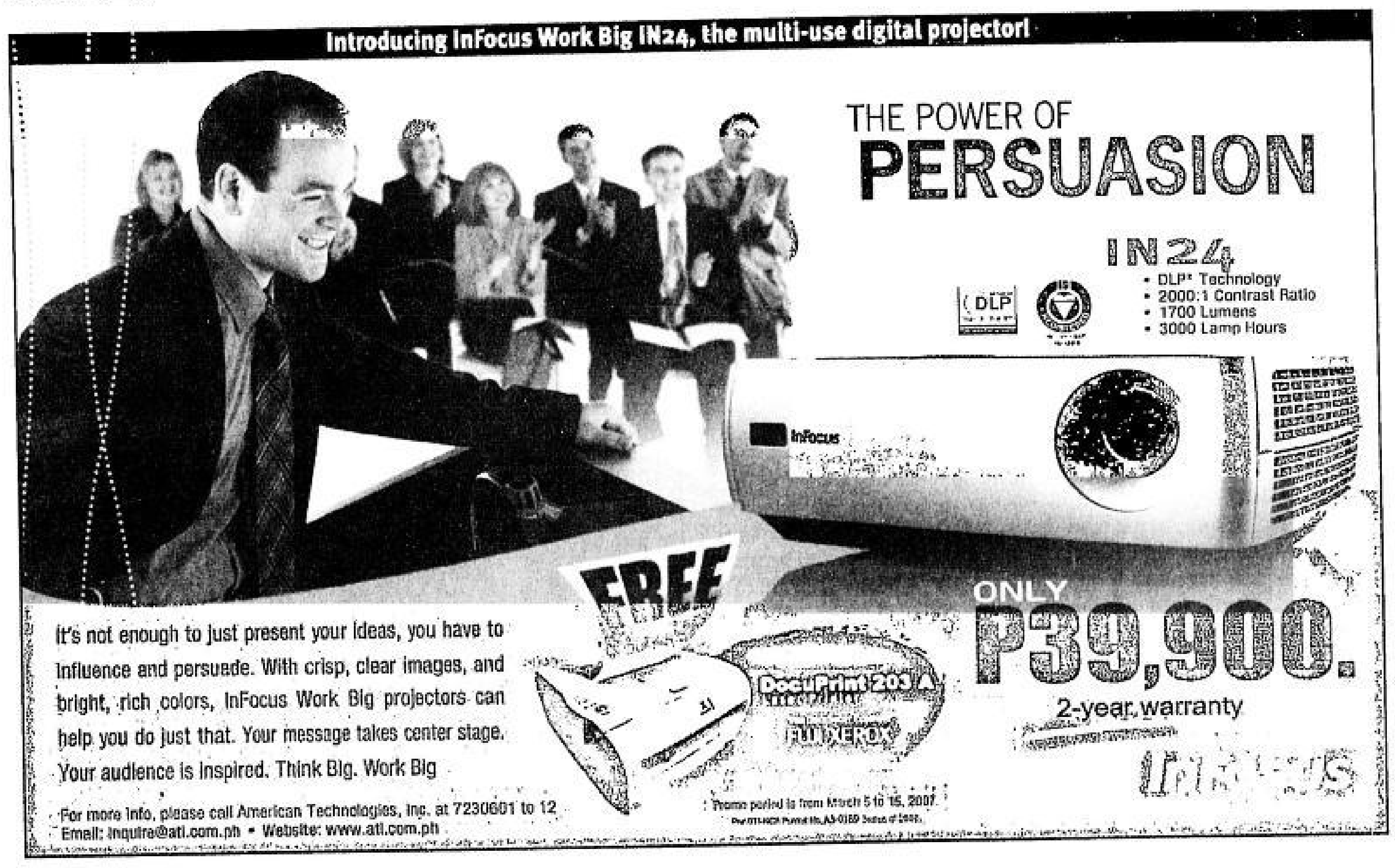
Second Game:

RED BULL 98—Penny 23, Baguio 17, Valenzuela 15, Cruz 12, Sharma 8, Hrabak 7, Fonacier 6, Villanueva 6, Ybanez 2, Alvarez 2, Membrere 0, Najorda 0, Bugia 0.

PUREFOODS 88—Yap J. 28, King 24, Salvador 9, Evangelista 6, Castillo 5, Simon 4, Yap R. 4, Yee 4, Artadi 2, Gamboa 2.

Quarters: 19-27, 47-53, 78-67, 98-88.

More stories on A29 to 32



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Knowledge is Power

PLDT Enables Heavyweights in the KPO Industry

"Clearly, the offshoring industry is just beginning to peak, as specific industries are proving to be areas of strength for the Philippines on the global outsourcing map," said PLDT SVP and Head of the Corporate Business Group Eric R. Alberto, at the E-Services Philippines 7th Global Sourcing Conference and Exhibition. Mr. Alberto was one of the executive panelists at a discussion led by NASSCOM President, Kiran Karnik, titled The Next Level: Knowledge Process Outsourcing.

"What makes the industry more exciting is its dynamism," Mr. Alberto added, "From plain BPO operations, the Philippines is clearly becoming a competitive player and embracing more value-added KPO opportunities."

The shift in the demand from BPO to KPO was the hot topic at this year's conference and exhibition, as outsourcing top guns showcased their services to foreign investors. For the past 6 years, E-Services Philippines has effectively promoted the country as the ultimate global "outsource resource" for IT-enabled services, generating around US $23.5 million in new contracts just last year.

"Ever since the infancy stages of the call center industry, PLDT has always been there," says Nerisse S. Ramos, PLDT FVP and Head of Corporate Business Solutions, "Knowledge Process Outsourcing is really the deeper side of the business—not simply outsourcing agents but also analysis—providing conclusions and results, especially on the IT side. Analysis and high-end knowledge activities certainly offer better job-stickiness and handsome profits over process-oriented jobs. And as the industry moves to the next level, PLDT will always be there, not just in terms of infrastructure, but also as the KPO industry's expert partner in all its ICT solution requirements."

While the Philippines continues to hold its own as a darling of the BPO industry, companies are keen to move one step up the value chain by serving global niche markets. These days, back-end processing and customer support are taking a backseat to KPO, the next wave in the offshoring industry. Parallel to a shift in the demands of the global outsourcing market, local companies now have much more to offer than non-core technical and support services.

Senator Manuel Roxas tests the award winning SWUP technology on a wireless ATM.

Senator Manuel Roxas shakes hands with PLDT SVP & Head of Corporate Business Group, Eric Alberto, a panelist during the E-services CEO Forum on KPO.

Telco leader PLDT is ready to equip the Philippines with the telco muscle to become a global player. In fact, two of the company's products, PLDT Shops.Work UnPlugged (SWUP), a wireless networking solution, and PLDT F.A.S.Track, a field asset tracking system, won awards in this year's IT-Enablers Category for "Most Innovative Product of the Year" and "Most Creative Application Service of the Year", respectively. PLDT SWUP enables businesses with the technology to perform wireless transactions over a secure, virtual private network (VPN). PLDT F.A.S.Track is an application-based business solution that allows companies to wirelessly monitor the whereabouts of their mobile assets simultaneously and in real time. These are only part of the wide range of robust business solutions that PLDT has empowered many companies with. Since the BPO boom in the Philippines, PLDT has provided world-class business solutions and ICT infrastructure to outsourcing firms and will continue to do so as these companies make the shift to KPO.

The Board of Investments estimates that the Philippine BPO sector's revenue will grow 37% this year to US $4.99 billion from last year's estimated US $3.63 billion. By 2010, the BPO sector is slated to become a US $12.5 billion industry. Now that more outsourcing companies in the Philippines are stepping up to meet increasing KPO demands, the requirement for enabling infrastructure is more crucial than ever.

"Everything's coming together really well," says Eric R. Alberto, "The public and private sectors of the country are in this together and there are clear paths for the Philippines to become a formidable player in the call center, BPO and the higher-value KPO industry. As we strive to make the Philippines the preferred destination for BPO and KPO companies, we should equip our workers and managers with the ability to think and analyze rather than just accomplish tasks. It's time to focus and bring our infrastructure and resources to even more competitive levels, so we can attain sustainable growth in the industry."

PLDT F.A.S.Track: Most Creative Application Service of the Year. Receiving the award are Gary Ignacio, PLDT F.A.S.Track Product Manager, and Nurjehan Dayrit, PLDT Corporate Sales Business Head.

PLDT SWUP: Most Innovative Product of the Year. Receiving the award are Antonio Darjuan, PLDT SWUP Sr. Product Manager, and Precy Katigbak, PLDT Corporate Sales Business Head.

L-R: Jay Lagdameo and Precy Katigbak, PLDT Corporate Sales Business Heads, Anton Lim, PLDT CBG-VIP Accounts Head, Sen. Manuel Roxas, Eric Alberto, PLDT SVP & Head of Corporate Business Group, Nerissa Ramos, PLDT FVP & Head of Corporate Business Solutions, Nurjehan Dayrit and Luigi Lopa, PLDT Corporate Sales Business Heads.

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Ombudsman rules against Peewee Trinidad

Petition seeking to reverse order for his dismissal nixed

By DJ Yap

THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN HAS junked the plea of dismissed Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad seeking the reversal of its Jan. 12 resolution ordering his ouster from office.

In a resolution dated Feb. 23, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez also dismissed charges that Trinidad and nine other city officials—Vice Mayor Antonino Calixto and eight councilors—were not accorded due process when she ordered their suspension over their approval of an allegedly anomalous garbage disposal contract.

According to Gutierrez, the rules and doctrines laid down by the Supreme Court gives her office the power to suspend and dismiss officials based on incontrovertible evidence.

No abuse of authority

The 34-page resolution also gave no weight to allegations by Trinidad that the Ombudsman exceeded its authority by immediately suspending him and the other officials.

Trinidad, Calixto and 10 city councilors were charged last year with approving a multimillion peso garbage contract without conducting a public bidding.

The Ombudsman suspended them for six months and, in January, dismissed them from government service, except for two councilors who were granted immunity in exchange for testifying against the accused officials.

Respondents were given a chance

Gutierrez said her office could not be accused of "evident bias" since all the parties had submitted their position papers, and the respondents had the chance to try to disprove the evidence presented.

The Ombudsman also denied Trinidad's petition to recall the immunity granted to the witnesses in the garbage contract case.

She said her office had sifted through official records and minutes of meetings of the Pasay City Council to determine that there was a conspiracy that led to the renegotiation of the garbage contract without a public bidding.

Solicitor General files motion

Meanwhile, the Office of the Solicitor General has asked the Court of Appeals to withdraw its order temporarily stopping the implementation of Calixto's dismissal from government service.

The OSG questioned the grant of the temporary restraining order, saying the motion for reconsideration filed by Calixto had already been denied by the Ombudsman.

It said the petition for a TRO was not apt, since the remedy of appeal remained available and thus, a petition for review, prohibition and TRO could not be filed.

Since the TRO was issued, Calixto has gone twice to City Hall in an attempt to regain his post and assume the position of acting mayor. His attempts, however, have been rebuffed by the Department of the Interior and Loccal Goverment and the Pasay police which denied him entry on both occasions.

DID YOU KNOW

CARLOS Palanca Street in Quiapo, Manila used to be known as Calle Echague, after Rafael Echague, governor general of the Philippines from 1862 to 1865.

Carlos Palanca was the first Chinese consul to the Philippines. He was born Tan Quien-sien in China in 1844, and died in Manila in 1901. A prestigious literary award was also named after him.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

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—APPLE PEREZ, 40,
Panay Avenue, Quezon City

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San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City

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THE LADY OF WHITE CROSS

Orphanage marks founder's 100th year

By Miko L. Morelos

"HELLO, VISITOR!" A BOY OF ABOUT 3 YEARS old called out when he caught sight of a man at the gate.

The boy, one of several children staying at White Cross, an orphanage on Santolan Street in San Juan, was in the playground with other kids.

Another group, upon hearing his greeting, immediately dropped their toys while others got off their mini tricycles or rocking horses and ran to the gate.

Within seconds, the man was bombarded with more greetings, as well as smiles and a hand wave from the shyer kids.

"That's okay, you can stop saying hello now. You might lose your voice if you go on saying hello," a caregiver at the orphanage told a child who was screaming.

The children resumed playing. Every now and then, some of them who were playing tag would shriek or scream as the caregivers watched over them to make sure no one got hurt.

For social workers, looking after the kids at White Cross, one of the oldest child care institutions in the country, can be quite a demanding task. On March 6, the orphanage will mark the centennial birthday of its founder, Victoria Lopez de Araneta. A marker commemorating the event will be unveiled by the National Historical Institute at the institution on that day.

White plague

Established in 1936, the orphanage originally housed children of tuberculosis (TB) patients who were confined at Quezon Institute on E. Rodriguez Avenue in Quezon City. At that time, the disease spread like wildfire among the population and killed hundreds of people. A cure had yet to be discovered then for TB which was also known as the white plague.

The newly-opened orphanage was known by its name in Spanish (La Cruz Blanco) which was the prevalent language of the elite in the 1930s. It was also known as Quezon Preventorium, after one of its patrons, President Manuel Quezon.

With De Araneta at the helm, the board bought a four-hectare lot in Santolan, San Juan to build the orphanage on. The building was designed by Pablo Antonio who was later named National Artist for Architecture.

In 1938, the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul took over the institution and opened its doors to an initial batch of 20 children of TB patients.

Generous donations from socialites and government officials got the orphanage running, through the countless charity dinners and fund-raisers mounted by the tireless patroness.

Recalls daughter Lina Araneta-Santiago: "My mother had this knack of getting all kinds of people involved in her charity work—from powerful people in government, including Presidents Quezon, Manuel Roxas, Elpidio Quirino and Ramon Magsaysay—to jockeys, boxers, entrepreneurs, even housewives. The social gatherings reached out to other potential donors to keep White Cross afloat."

Lasting subsidy

Quezon, for one, signed a bill giving the institution a share from horse race revenues. Supported by her influential brother, J. Amado, De Araneta batted for Commonwealth Act No. 363 which gave the orphanage the subsidy that it continues to receive up to this day.

At the outbreak of World War II, the nuns moved their wards to Welfareville in nearby Mandaluyong when the Japanese assumed control of the orphanage. When the war ended in 1946, the residents of White Cross returned with the help of American liberation forces.

Today, the orphanage looks after 115 children aged 6 and below, 70 of whom are boys. Aside from preparing the children for adoption, it also serves as a temporary haven for the kids of poor, working and single parents.

Caregivers say their wards can be quite a handful.

"One time, as they went down stairs to practice for a presentation, the boys saw a white cat and chased it," Pauleen, a social worker, told the INQUIRER.

When they finally cornered the animal, they played with it. Practice that afternoon was called off on account of a cat. "Let them be, they're children after all," their teacher said.

A CAREGIVER and her wards play a game.

PHOTOS BY RYAN LIM

Sr. Iluminada Meloto or Sister Lumen, D.C., one of the longest-serving nuns at White Cross, said that in the 1950s, there were about 350 children at the orphanage. The Daughters of Charity ran the orphanage until 2004. Today, it is managed by the White Cross board of directors.

"The ward I was handling then had 78 children and at that time, I was one of the youngest nuns there," Meloto said. She was assigned to White Cross when she was 23. The nun, who is now 78, flew in from Iloilo to attend the March 6 event.

Apart from Meloto, there were only six other nuns who were assigned at the orphanage. Because their resources were limited, they were backed up by only two social workers and two nurses. Despite the big number of children they had to care for, Meloto said that it was not that difficult to train the children to be well-behaved.

"At first, the task may seem daunting. But fortunately, I had instilled in them the value of discipline," she added.

She recalled how her wards were quick to follow her instructions during showers or meals and other activities.

Meloto recalled how the children would line up to wait for their turn to bathe. Later, they would go to the closet area where their clothes were stored. According to her, it always amazed her how the children knew which clothes belonged to them.

"Their *kamisetas* (cotton shirts) were of the same fabric and color and they only differed in sizes," she said. "But for some reason, they would tell me or the social worker helping them, 'That's not my shirt.'"

At meal time, the children would stand patiently by their assigned chairs and wait for the food to be served.

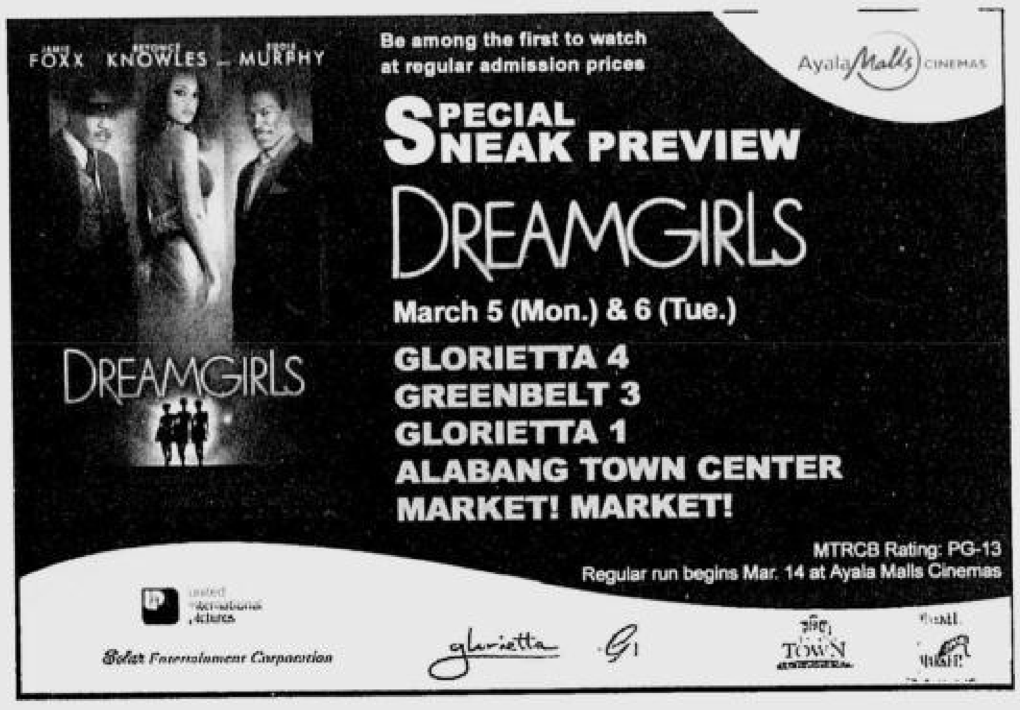
ABANDONED babies are later put up for adoption.

"I would ring a bell to tell them to sit down, to say their prayers before meals and to start eating. It was as if they were soldiers," Meloto recalled with a laugh.

Like Meloto, Sr. Teresita Montañano, D.C., who was the last nun-administrator of the orphanage, misses taking care of the children at White Cross.

"I enjoyed my stay here at White Cross. I miss it, especially the babies. When I look at them, I feel my problems drift away," she said.

> Established in 1936, the orphanage in San Juan is home to 115 children aged 6 and below



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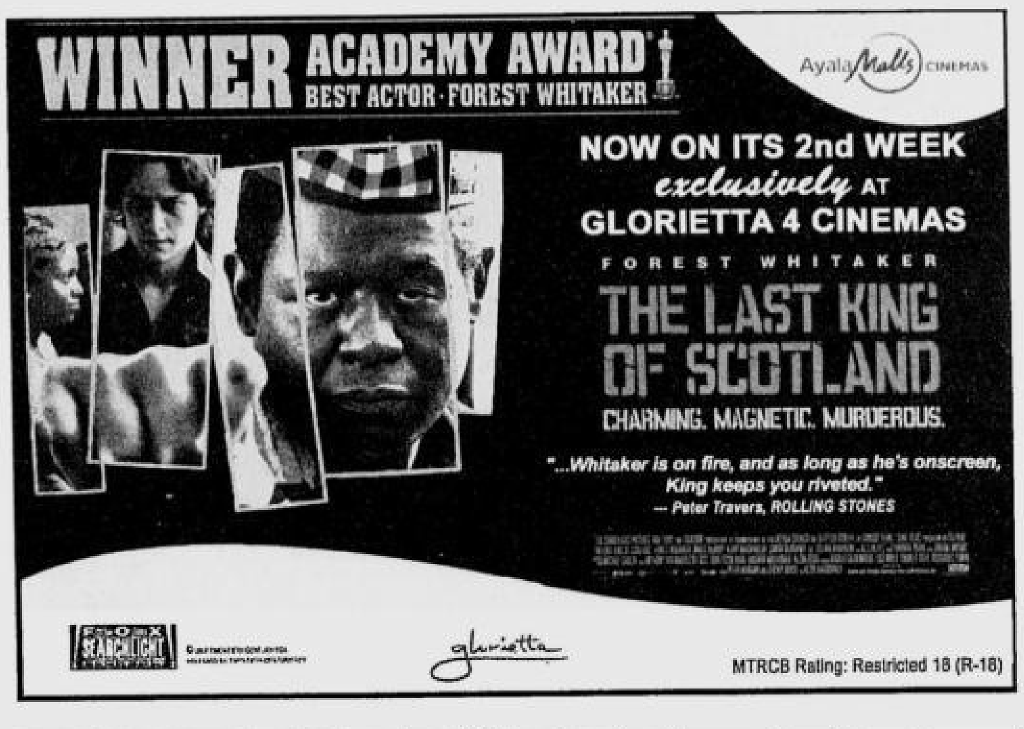

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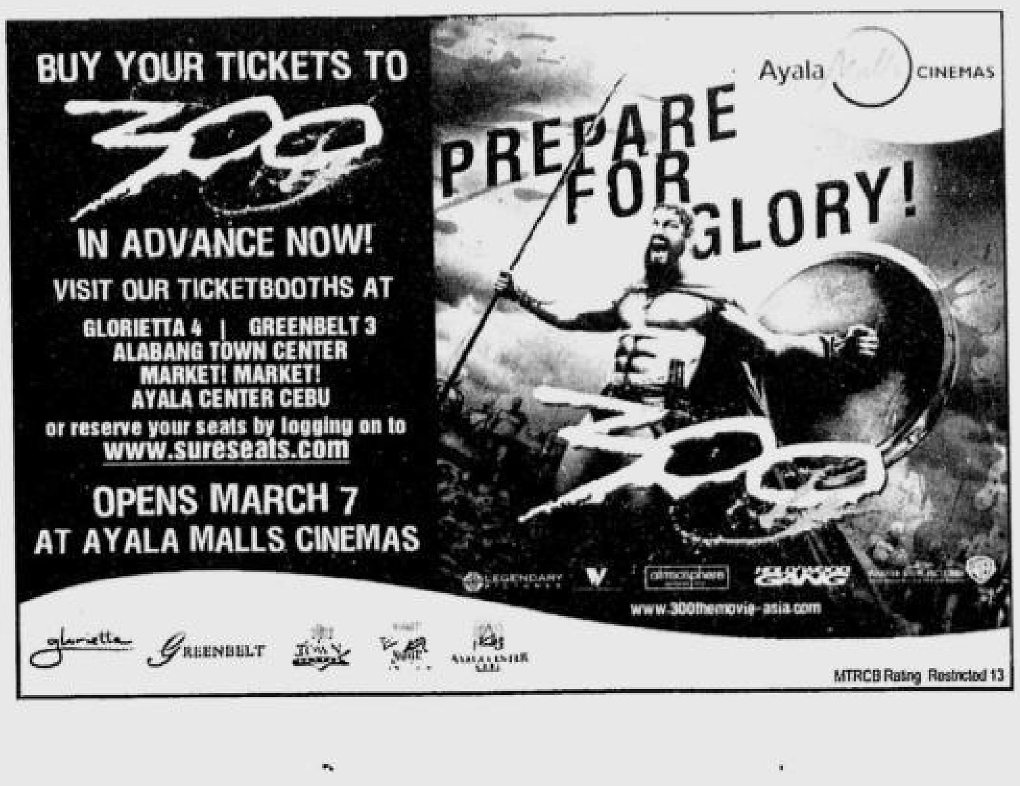

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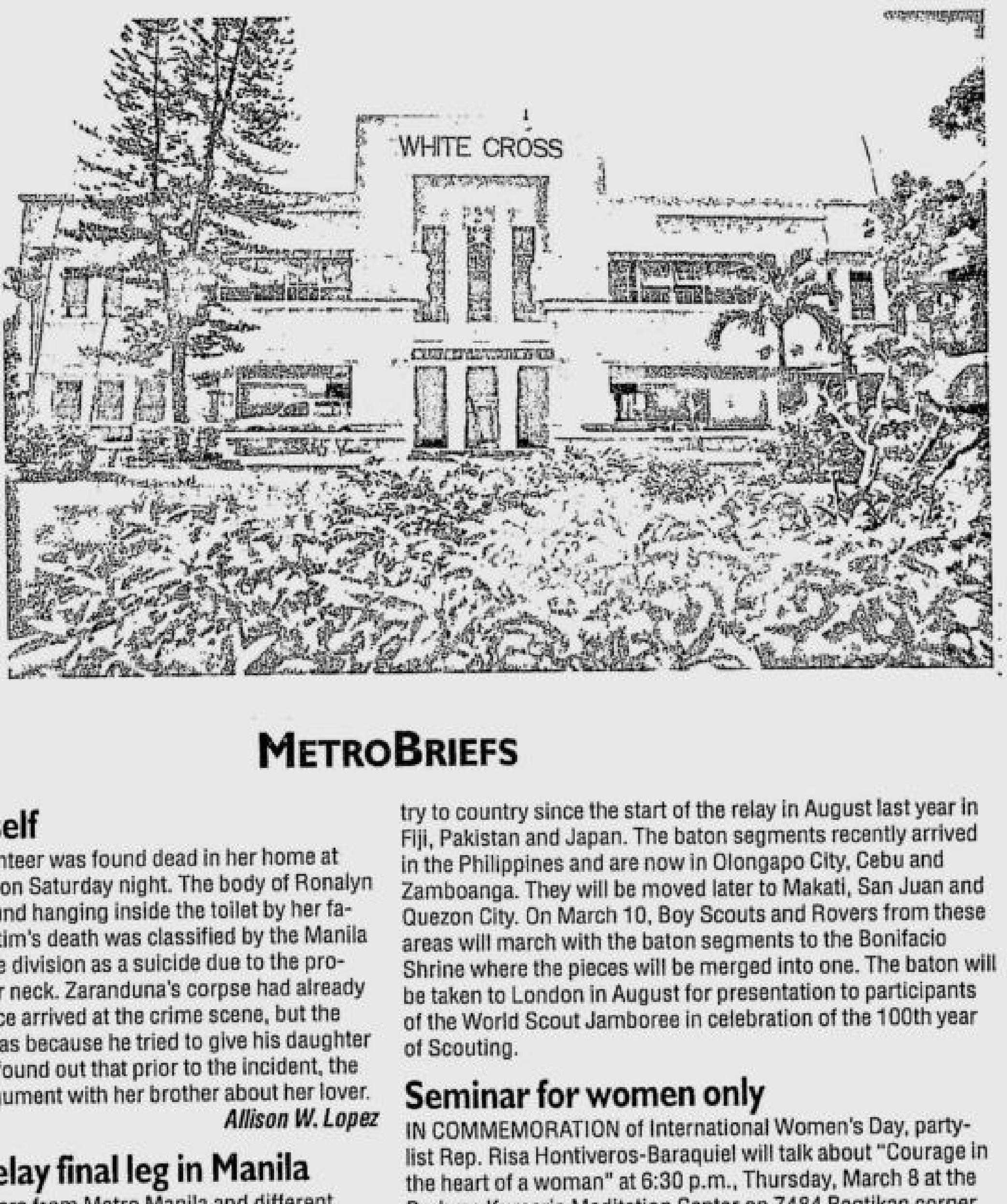


THE FACADE of the institution was designed by National Artist Pablo Antonio.

METROBRIEFS

Teenager kills self

A GAWAD Kalinga volunteer was found dead in her home at Baseco, Tondo, Manila on Saturday night. The body of Ronalyn Zaranduna, 19, was found hanging inside the toilet by her father, Leopoldo. The victim's death was classified by the Manila Police District homicide division as a suicide due to the pronounced V-mark on her neck. Zaranduna's corpse had already been moved when police arrived at the crime scene, but the victim's father said it was because he tried to give his daughter first aid. Investigators found out that prior to the incident, the victim had a heated argument with her brother about her lover.

Allison W. Lopez

Peace Baton relay final leg in Manila

BOY SCOUTS and Rovers from Metro Manila and different provinces will gather at the Bonifacio Shrine in front of the Manila City Hall on March 10 for the culmination of the Asia-Pacific Rover Peace Baton relay. The baton, which aims to promote peace throughout the Asia-Pacific region, is made up of three parts which have been separately passed on from country to country since the start of the relay in August last year in Fiji, Pakistan and Japan. The baton segments recently arrived in the Philippines and are now in Olongapo City, Cebu and Zamboanga. They will be moved later to Makati, San Juan and Quezon City. On March 10, Boy Scouts and Rovers from these areas will march with the baton segments to the Bonifacio Shrine where the pieces will be merged into one. The baton will be taken to London in August for presentation to participants of the World Scout Jamboree in celebration of the 100th year of Scouting.

Seminar for women only

IN COMMEMORATION of International Women's Day, party-list Rep. Risa Hontiveros-Baraquiel will talk about "Courage in the heart of a woman" at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, March 8 at the Brahma Kumaris Meditation Center on 7484 Bagtikan corner Sacred Heart Streets in San Antonio Village, Makati City. The activity, which is for women only, is the first of a series of seminars organized by the Mahavirni Group of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University. For inquiries, please call 8907960.

LUNAR ECLIPSE
A sculpture on the Cathedral of Lausanne is pictured in front of the moon at the beginning of a lunar eclipse in Lausanne March 3. REUTERS

Religious surge in once-atheist China takes leaders by surprise

SHANGHAI, CHINA—QIN FANGYI'S religious moment came after a walk in the pouring rain two years ago to a nunnery for a ceremony that her mother had urged her to attend.

Qin's mother converted to Buddhism two years earlier despite her husband's open hostility to religion, and quietly nudged her daughter into having a look for herself.

"I got there at about 8 a.m. and was told the ceremony was delayed by an hour," said Qin, a 21-year-old design student. "At about 8:55, all of the sudden the sky grew clear and the sun came out and people began cheering and screaming that the real Buddha was about to appear in the sky. Although I didn't see the Buddha myself, I was amazed, and I began to feel the power of God."

Qin's story, although unique in its details, has an ending that is fast becoming commonplace, as Chinese by the tens of millions shed decades of state-imposed atheism. The phenomenon has gained momentum so fast that it appears to have taken the government by surprise.

A recent poll by East China Normal University estimated that 31.4 percent of Chinese 16 or older are religious, putting the number of believers at roughly 400 million.

In recent years, official estimates have placed the number of believers at around 100 million, but the fact that the new survey's results were not only made public but were also reported by the government-controlled Chinese news media suggests that the survey has been given at least some official credence.

However, in China, there is no separation of church and state as the ruling Communist Party, theoretically atheist, administers all religious affairs and appoints all religious officials.

Perhaps the most popular time of the year for Chinese to engage in public worship is the traditional Chinese New Year, which began last month. Buddhist and Taoist temples, in particular, overflowed with visitors who prayed for ancestors or the health of their own households.

Official attitudes toward religion have gradually loosened in China in recent years, enabling the resurgence of popular belief. Places of worship for the five officially recognized faiths—Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam—have been restored or built anew, and public worship allowed again amid signs that the government sees limited religiosity as a useful component of its drive to build what it calls a "harmonious society."

Chinese experts say the growing popularity of religious belief has been driven by social crises involving corruption and the expanding gap between rich and poor. *NYT*

In St. Petersburg, police break up anti-Putin rally

SAINT PETERSBURG—RUSSIAN POLICE detained about 50 protesters on Saturday as 5,000 people demonstrated in Saint Petersburg against President Vladimir Putin's leadership, officials said.

Demonstrators at the so-called "march of the dissenters" broke through a police cordon intended to keep them in the main square, and scuffles ensued as they marched along Nevsky Prospekt, the main avenue of Russia's second city.

Police said nearly 50 people were arrested during the protest. The Other Russia opposition alliance, which organized the march, said about 200 people were arrested or briefly held for questioning.

The demonstrators, from across the political spectrum, shouted "Disgrace," "Russia without Putin" and "Out with the corrupted authorities."

Some carried lit flares over their heads while others brandished placards, reading "Putin is very bad" and "Kasyanov is an honest man," referring to former prime minister and presidential candidate Mikhail Kasyanov. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Saudi, Iran agree to fight Sunni-Shiite strife

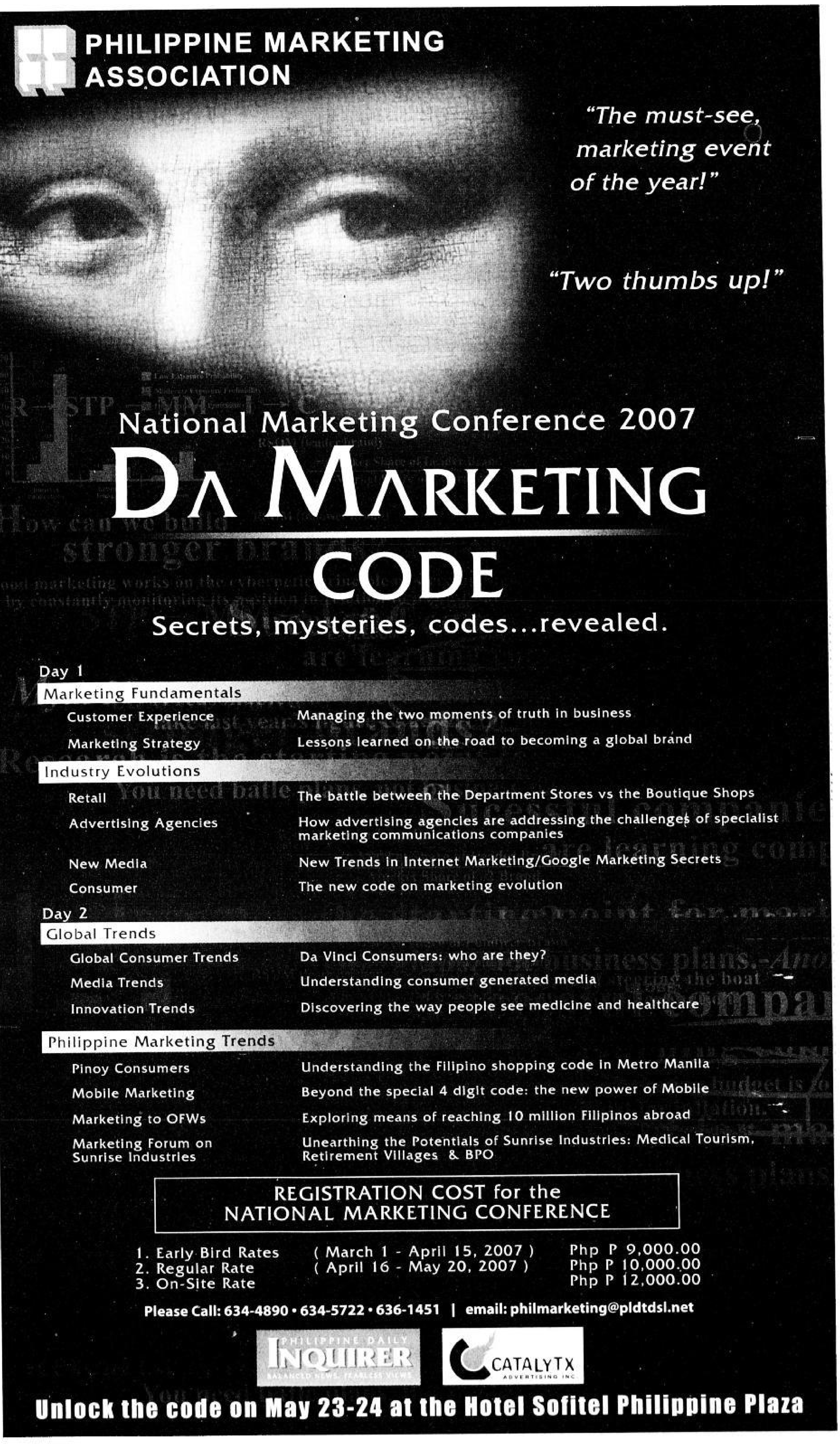
RIYADH—The leaders of regional heavyweights Iran and and Saudi Arabia agreed at talks in Riyadh to fight growing Sunni-Shiite strife, warning that it was the greatest danger facing the region. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said he and Saudi King Abdullah agreed at their meeting on Saturday that their two countries would work together to thwart "enemy" plots seeking to divide the Islamic world. "The two leaders affirmed that the greatest danger presently threatening the Islamic nation is the attempt to fuel the fire of strife between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, and that efforts must concentrate on countering these attempts and closing ranks," Saudi Arabia's official SPA news agency added. The meeting between the regional Shiite and Sunni Muslim oil powers was held against a backdrop of mounting fears that the sectarian bloodshed engulfing Iraq could spill over into the region. Relations between Riyadh and Tehran have been strained over non-Arab Iran's growing influence in Iraq and its alleged backing of Shiite militias battling the once-ruling Sunni minority there. *AFP*

US emissions seen growing without letup

THE BUSH administration estimates that the United States' emissions of gases that contribute to global warming will grow nearly as fast through the next decade as they did the previous decade, according to a long-delayed report being completed for the United Nations. The document, the US Climate Action Report, emphasizes that the projections show progress toward a goal Bush laid out in a 2002 speech: that greenhouse gas emissions grow at a slower rate than the economy. Since that speech, he has repeated his commitment to lessening "greenhouse gas intensity" without imposing formal limits on the gases. But when shown the report, an assortment of experts on climate trends and policy described the projected emissions as unacceptable given the rising evidence of risks from unabated global warming. Several environmental campaigners said there was no real distinction between Bush's target and "business as usual." "If you set the hurdle 1 inch above the ground you can't fail to clear it," said David D. Doniger, the director of climate policy for the Natural Resources Defense Council, which has long criticized the administration and sought binding gas cuts. *NYT*

East Timor rebel escapes as Aussie troops storm base

SYDNEY—East Timorese rebel Alfredo Reinado escaped when Australian troops stormed his stronghold, killing four of his armed men, a defense official said Sunday. The fugitive's disappearance came as reports said unrest had broken out in the capital Dili, where gunshots have been heard and cars set alight. "I can confirm that the International Security Force this morning conducted operations in Same, south of Dili," an Australian Department of Defense spokesperson told AFP. "The purpose of the operation was to apprehend Alfredo Reinado and his associates. At this stage we haven't apprehended him, however, operations will continue until such time as we do." *AFP*



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Iraq Qaida group posts video of execution of 18

BAGHDAD—A GROUP LINKED to al-Qaida in Iraq which said it killed 18 policemen to avenge the alleged rape of a Sunni woman has posted a video on the Internet showing a row of men being shot at point blank range.

The video opens with the men, all blindfolded, sitting and standing in rows and an on-screen message which blames the executions on the Iraqi government for ignoring the demands of the so-called "Islamic State of Iraq."

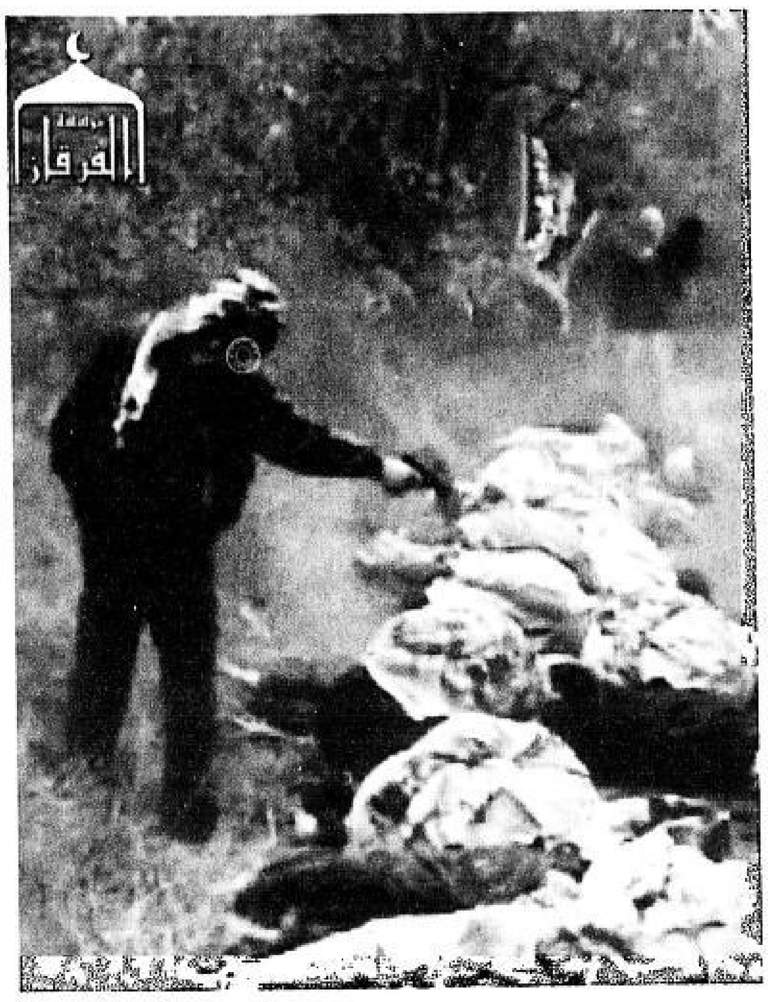
The video then shows masked gunmen, chanting praise to Allah, standing behind a long row of men kneeling in a muddy ditch amid a grove of trees, their hands tied behind their backs.

The gunmen then begin firing at the backs of the heads of the men, who slump forward one after another. The gunmen continue firing at their bodies, still chanting.

"This operation is only a drop in the bucket, and what will come is more wicked and bitter, with the permission of Allah the Almighty," a message on the screen warns.

Interior ministry operations director Brig. Gen. Abdel Karim Khalaf told AFP Saturday that 14 officers missing after their convoy was ambushed on Thursday had been found dead in Baquba, north of Baghdad.

Shortly afterwards, a coalition of insurgent groups led by al-Qaida and known as the "Islamic State of Iraq" said in an Internet message the hostages would be killed to avenge the alleged rape of a Sunni woman by Shiite police. *AFP*



THIS grab taken from a video posted March 4 on the Internet allegedly shows the execution of 18 kidnapped Iraqi policemen. AFP

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UN's Big 5 fail to settle all differences on Iran

WASHINGTON—MAJOR POWERS failed on Saturday to settle all their differences over a second UN sanctions resolution against Iran for its nuclear work but remain committed to passing one soon, the United States said.

"There is still some work to be done on a few outstanding issues, but all parties remain committed to a second resolution in the near future," state department spokesperson Kurtis Cooper said in a statement issued after the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany held a conference call to discuss a new UN Security Council resolution against Iran.

The United States and leading European countries suspect Iran is seeking to build nuclear weapons under the cover of a civilian atomic program. Tehran denies the charge and says its program is for generating electricity.

The new measures under discussion are a follow-up to a key Security Council resolution passed on Dec. 23 that imposed trade sanctions on sensitive nuclear materials and technology as well as other penalties after Iran refused to suspend uranium enrichment. The sanctions would be suspended if Iran complied.

The state department put a positive gloss on Saturday's discussions but they appeared to have fallen short of US hopes that the group—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States as well as Germany—would be able to agree on the elements of a resolution during the conference call.

US and European diplomats have said the new sanctions are expected to include a mandatory travel ban on Iranian officials involved in the nuclear program and an expansion of the list of banned nuclear material and technology Iran may import and export.

Also under consideration is enlarging the list of Iranian officials whose assets were frozen in the December resolution. *Reuters*

Demand for India child laborers undiminished

CALCUTTA, INDIA—SEVEN DAYS a week, 8-year-old Jasmina K. rises before dawn to fetch water for the household where she works as a maid. She washes, sweeps and hauls until about 11 at night.

After her father died, she said, her mother sent her and her sister from their West Bengal village to work as maids here. Each month, she is paid 100 rupees, or about $2.25.

India has no outright ban on child labor and had long allowed the employment of children under 14 in all but what are deemed "hazardous" occupations. But last October a stricter law took effect: It prohibits the employment of children under 14 in hotels and restaurants, and as domestic servants.

Five months later, children's rights advocates say, the law has had little effect.

"Because of the booming economy and the spread of the nuclear family, we've seen a rise in demand for domestic help at a time when it's becoming more expensive to employ people," said Surina Rajan of the International Labor Organization.

Hiring an 8-year-old, fresh from India's rural heartland, is a simple matter. Impoverished villagers willingly turn their children over to middlemen who promise a better life in the cities, children's advocacy groups say.

INDIAN children celebrate Holi, the Hindu festival of colors, March 4. AFP

"Placement agencies in Delhi and Mumbai are growing like mushrooms," said Manabendra Nath Ray of Save the Children UK. "It is an extremely lucrative business."

The Indian government estimates that 12 million children under the age of 14 are employed; children's advocates say the figure could be closer to 60 million. *NYT*

WHAT'S INSIDE
Alcano, Django reach last 32 /A30

SPORTS

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Mavs win 15th straight /A31

Maiden HK shows way

All-Filipino crew steers tycoon's massive yacht

By Jasmine W. Payo

A MASSIVE 115-FOOT YACHT from Hong Kong led the fleet even as several local bets remained in the thick of the action yesterday in the 200 nautical-mile sprint of the 5th e-Standard Insurance Manila to Boracay Race.

Maiden Hong Kong, a Juan 115 Custom skippered by Frank Pong and with an all-Filipino crew, towed the field past midnight in idyllic conditions off the Verde Island Passage located between Batangas and Mindoro Island.

The race bulletin released yesterday said that Karakoa, an Excel 53 captained by the veteran Ray Ordoveza, managed to close in on the HK yacht to pace the local fleet.

Pong, a former commodore of the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club, is among the favored foreign racers after setting the fastest time of 17 hours aboard Jelik, which also had an all-Filipino crew in the 2004 edition.

KARAKOA, skippered by Ray Ordoveza, leads the Philippine fleet behind Maiden Hong Kong.

Defending champion Centennial, a Sydney 46 skippered by the Philippines' Ernesto Echauz, was in the middle of the fleet as the 28 foreign and local racers head toward the finish off Boracay Island in Aklan.

Other expected strong finishers are MKL 49 Strewth of Australia's Geoffrey Hill and Farr-Mills 51 Mandrake of HK's Frederick Kinmonth.

"It's really a tough field," said tournament chair Jesus Avecilla Jr. "But it has been an ideal sailing race course. The winds are favorable, they're strong. In sailing, our boats are relying on the strength of the wind. Our engine is our wind."

The seasoned yachtsmen sailed out of the Manila Yacht Club on Saturday afternoon.

All racers are expected to dock in the pristine waters of Boracay today. Action resumes with the inshore and offshore events around Boracay Island and the Tablas Strait for the 15th President's Cup Regatta.

The back-to-back events drew participants from North America, Europe, Australia, China, Japan and Southeast Asia.

The awarding for the Manila to Boracay race will be on March 6 at the Fairways and Bluewaters.

In 2006, Echauz's Sydney 46 Centennial, helmed by Jamie Wilmot, topped three of the six inshore races to rule the President's Cup in Subic.

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Alcano, Django advance to last 32

FOUR FILIPINO CAMPAIGNERS, LED BY REIGNING WORLD POOL CHAMPION Ronnie Alcano, won their second straight matches Saturday night and advanced to the round-of-32 in the 3rd World 8-Ball Championship at the Al Bashton Hall in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates.

Joining Alcano in the next round, according to a report from Yen Makabenta, chair of the Billards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines, were former world No. 1 Francisco "Django" Bustamante, 2006 World Pool Leaque winner Dennis Orcollo and overseas Filipino worker Elvis Calasang.

Defending champion Efren "Bata" Reyes and compatriot Joybe Vicente were going for their second wins while five other Filipinos with 1-1 cards, including Lee Van Corteza, remained in contention, Makabenta said.

The 34-year-old Alcano edged compatriot Joven Alba (8-6) in Group E, Bustamante beat another OFW Al James Ortega (8-5) and Orcollo crushed Aki Heiskanen of Finland (8-2) in Group F and Calasang outplayed Jason Klatt of Canada (8-3) in Group A.

Reyes opened his defense of the World 8-Ball championship in style, routing Rizandro Arrieta of Venezuela, 8-2, late Saturday.

ALCANO

BUSTAMANTE

Playing flawlessly, Reyes clustered four straight racks from a 4-2 advantage to underscore his determination to keep the crown.

Corteza also won his first match against Michael Felder of Austria, 8-2, also late Saturday.

However, Corteza, top player of Negros Billiard Stable (NBS), bowed to the favored Hui Kai-hsia of Taiwan, 8-3, Sunday and needed to win his last match to progress.

Joven Bustamante, also an OFW in the Middle East, bounced back from a loss to Thorsten Hohmann of Germany, 8-6, to clobber Roberto Frietas of Brazil, 8-2, yesterday. Mario Tolentino, another OFW, bowed to Niels Feijen of the Netherlands, 8-4.

Alba and Al James Ortega also have 1-1 records.

Other renowned entries in the round-of-32 were Hsia, Feijen, defending champion Wu Chia-ching of Taiwan, Goran Mladenovic of Serbia and Montenegro, Das Serge of Belgium and Shaverdi Farhad of Iran.

Wu bested Thomas Damm of Germany, 8-6; Mladenovic upset Thomas "The Lean Machine" Engert of Germany, 8-3; and Farhad beat Thorsten Hohmann of Germany (8-7). *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

Tagaytay vaults to 2nd spot in Asian team chess

Standings after three rounds:

10 points—Pavlodar (Kazakhstan); 9.0—Tagaytay (RP); 8.5—Shanghai (China), Saipa (Iran); 7.0—Rah Ahan (Iran); 6.5—Amman (Jordan), Dubai (UAE); 5.5—Tidewater (Iran), Damascus (Syria), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Aleppo (Syria); 5.0—Sulamania (Iraq), Erbil (Iraq), Sharjah (UAE); 4.5—Calicut (India), Tehran (Iran); 3.5—Lahore (Pakistan); 2.0—Jerusalem (Palestine)

TEHRAN, IRAN—DEFENDING champion Tagaytay (Philippines) threw its full might against sixth-seed Tidewater (Iran), posting a decisive 3.5-0.5 win in the third round Saturday night to advance to solo second place in the 15th Asian Cities Chess Team Championship at the Eram Grand Hotel here Saturday.

Grandmasters Mark Paragua and Rogelio Antonio Jr. and International Master Oliver Dimakiling hurdled their respective opponents while IM Wesley So drew his match as the Filipinos closed in on two-time champion Pavlodar (Kazakhstan) going into the fourth round of this nine-day tournament.

Paragua, the third highest-rated player here with an Elo rating of 2573, whipped M. Sadatnajafi in 48 moves of the King's Indian Defense, while Antonio, the country's leading scorer in the Turin Olympiad in Italy last year, overpowered Fide Master Norteza Darban in 71 moves of the Sicilian Najdorf.

Dimakiling bounced back from a second-round setback to beat Adel Sadeghi on board three.

And So, the youngest member of the five-man Tagaytay-RP team, drew with Iran's No. 3, GM Amir Bagheri, on board four.

The 13-year-old So provided the Filipinos' lone victory against Rah Ahan (Iran) in the second round.

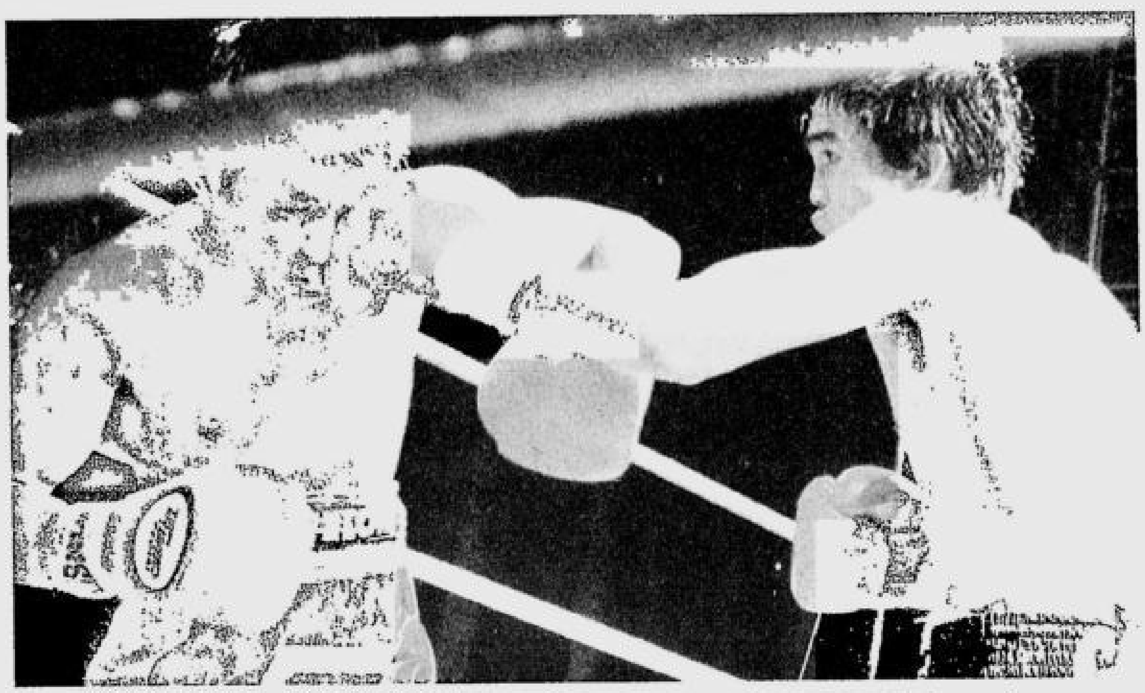
Overall, the team backed by Mayor Bambol Tolentino has a three-round total of nine points, one point behind Pavlodar.

The Filipinos swept 11th seed Sulamania (Iraq), 3.5-0.5, in the first round Friday and split the point with fifth seed Rah Ahan, 2-2, in the second round early Saturday.

Pavlodar, led by GMs Pavel Kotsur and Petr Kotsenko, demolished sixth seed Tidewater (Iran), 3-1, and third seed Saipa (Iran), 3-1.

In the fourth round set at 5 p.m. Sunday (10 p.m. Sunday in Manila), the Filipinos and the Kazakhs will dispute the lead.

"I like our chances right now," said Tagaytay-RP team captain Wilfredo Abalos. "Pavlodar, which boasts three strong GMs in its lineup, is our strongest rival in the tournament and our fourth-round encounter will be crucial in our title-retention bid."



ERIBERTO Gejon connects with a left straight to Wisan Sor Suchanya's face in the eighth round. RODEL ROTONI

Gejon whips Thai; Pacman snubs own fight promotion

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

LANKY ERIBERTO GEJON SHOWED HIS ALL-around skills with an easy unanimous decision win over Thailand's Wisan Sor Suchanya Saturday night at the Rajah Sulaiman Park in Ermita.

Two judges saw the bout at 100-91, while the third had it 100-90 in favor of Gejon, a protege of promoter Rex "Wakee" Salud.

The bout served as the main event of the "Rambol at the Bay" card put up by Manny Pacquiao's MP Promotions, Top Rank and Salud's RWS International.

The win improved Gejon's record to 23 wins against a loss and a draw, and lines him up for yet another title crack in the WBA, where he used to be the No. 2 minimumweight contender.

Pacquiao was a no-show, perhaps to avoid getting boos which he got plenty during his brief visit to Cebu on Feb. 24. He sparred for four rounds Saturday afternoon in Gen. Santos City against Aaron Melgarejo and Jesar Ancajas, and was reportedly making sure he was focused on his next fight against Jorge Solis.

Three Salud fighters lost with Apol Suico getting beaten for the first time by ex-Olympian Danilo Lerio by TKO in the second round; Bogie Delada absorbing a fifth-round TKO from Danilo Peña and Gideon Amba losing by majority decision to Armando Casa in a rematch of their 2005 bout.

Other results: Roel Laguna d. Marvin Batonila, TKO (8th round); Vicente Palicte d. Marc Polgahe, unanimous decision (6 rds.); Joel Rafols d. Roel Lagonero, split decision; Darryl Pucdol d. Rocky Batol-Batol, split decision; Rocky Marcial d. Michael Anas, KO (1st rd.).

NL Olympic Festival gets going today

By June Navarro

VIGAN—TRAINING ITS SIGHTS on the 2012 Olympics, the 2nd Philippine Olympic Festival unfolds today in this picturesque city aiming to unearth a potential treasure trove of talents who may don the national colors in the London Games.

A vast field of about 3,000 athletes and officials from 11 participating regions will compete in 18 disciplines, including 12 Olympic sports, in 10 different venues here.

No less than Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, POC chair Robert Aventajado and host Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson will open the week-long hostilities at the newly refurbished Quirino Stadium.

The event is the Northern Luzon qualifier of the POC, which will hold four other elimination legs in Mindanao, Visayas, Rizal and the National Capital Region before culminating in the national championships at the end of the year.

Medal winners in the elimination stages will advance to the national championships to be held at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and PhilSports Arena where they will compete against national athletes.

Basketball games will kick off action at the UNP gym. Other sports on tap are athletics, swimming, archery, taekwondo, wushu, badminton, billiards, football, karatedo, baseball, boxing, table tennis, chess, gymnastics, arnis and sepak takraw.

Heartless Pacquiao KO lands in LA Times

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

WHAT'S THE PRICE TAG FOR FILIPINO valor?

For an idea, read this excerpt on Manny Pacquiao, our national inspiration, straight from the Los Angeles Times:

"I told Oscar that Manny likes cash, he likes to deal in cash, he pays people in cash," Freddie Roach said Wednesday in Hollywood, where he appeared to help De La Hoya promote his May 5 fight against Floyd Mayweather Jr. "I didn't think there was anything wrong with it. Actually Manny wanted more cash."

Roach said that Bob Arum, too, relied on cash to later persuade Pacquiao to withdraw from the Golden Boy contract and sign with Top Rank.

"Arum gave Manny $1 million in cash right after Manny's (December) birthday," Roach said. "I don't know if it was wired to him, or given to him in person but Manny told me when it happened, 'I got a million in cash.'"

* * *

How much, do you think, is Pacquiao really worth in dollars?

A lot more than Filipino pride and values?

We may never know, really.

But it's definitely a lot more than the $250,000 in $20 bills, which obviously made Pacquiao's eyes pop when the hoard, stuffed in a suitcase, was offered to the Filipino boxing idol by De La Hoya after they met at the Los Angeles Airport.

Now, if the foregoing episode reported by the prestigious LA Times, wherein Pacquiao was made to appear like a blind, greedy hound, did not make you—a self-respecting Filipino—cringe, you're due for a heart check.

You see, Pacquiao, despite his monumental achievements in Las Vegas, had hardly made it to the sports section of the LA Times.

But last week, that thing about the suitcase bulging with crisp dollar bills being used to bait Pacquiao was a big story in the respected newspaper.

* * *

The LA Times was direct to the point:

"Oscar De La Hoya lured Pacquiao into signing a multi-fight contract by delivering to him a suitcase stuffed with $250,000 in cash as a signing bonus at a Beverly Hills steakhouse in September."

The De La Hoya bait for Pacquiao actually totaled $500,000 as would later be revealed—with the rest of the amount coming either through bank transfer or check.

It's also open knowledge that Pacquiao later made a heartless turnaround by renouncing the pact he had signed with De La Hoya.

How and why did Pacquiao make that hideous move?

Simple. Trainer Roach said all Arum had to do was give Manny $1 million for the Filipino hero to renounce the deal with De La Hoya.

In fact, Arum last December came all the way to Manila where he and Pacquiao made a moving, lovey-dovey announcement of their new deal at the historic Manila Hotel.

* * *

Hold it. Arum had been quoted as saying he never gave Pacquiao a single cent in cash.

Correct. Arum did not hand Pacquiao any amount in cash.

But, to repeat, Arum gave Pacquiao $1 million to renege on his contract with De La Hoya.

Stressed Arum: "Manny got a $500,000 check from us, and another $500,000 to pay back Golden Boy."

Pacquiao wanted cash, more cash, and Roach, Pacquiao's trusted mentor, insisted there was nothing wrong with that.

Maybe there was nothing wrong.

But only if you don't have values, only if you don't have delicadeza.

OK, Pacquiao deserved all the dollars he had amassed in those cock-eyed deals with both De La Hoya and Arum.

Unfortunately, Pacquiao finally made it big in the LA Times only after scoring that heartless knockout at the expense of Filipino pride and values.

Pinoy Numero Uno was both shallow and cheap in that huge dollar deal.

Cheaper by the millions, if you please.

* * *

(NEVER HEARD: Twelve-year-old Juvylyn U. Robles scored three resounding wins in the table tennis event of Stacaa (Southern Tagalog Calabarzon Athletic Association) meet. She did not get anything, even a faint recognition, for her feat. Why? Because competition was trivialized strictly as a team event, rued Nestor Robles, the winner's father from Cuenca, Batangas... Have you heard of Giselle C. Rojas of Lumampao Elementary School? She won four gold medals in swimming (freestyle and breaststroke, provincial division) as representative of Cuenca in the Stacaa, formerly the Straa which had produced many national athletes. Giselle's great feat did not create a ripple. Why? Because the Department of Education apparently did not know what grassroots sports development was all about.)

Tigers sweep Falcons, clinch baseball title

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS survived an early bases-loaded scare and downed Adamson, 5-3, yesterday to complete a two-game sweep of the UAAP men's baseball crown at the Rizal Memorial ball park.

The Falcons scored just one run to break the ice in the third inning despite filling the bags, and the Tigers quickly responded with two runs each in the fourth and fifth to clinch the best-of-three title series.

UST ace pitcher Jon-jon Robles worked the full nine innings to secure the victory which was a lot easier than the Tigers' come-from-behind 4-3 triumph last week.

Robles struck out 11 batters, yielded six hits and one earned run as he captured a second straight Most Valuable Player award on top of the Best Pitcher plum.

National University earlier captured third place by beating dethroned champion University of the Philippines, 4-2, on Thursday.

Mick Rhodes Natividad of NU was chosen Rookie of the Year.

The other awardees were Stefano Gino Baltao and Nico Lorenzo David of Ateneo and Marvin Malig of Adamson for most home runs; Al-Denn Lozada of UST, Alexander Tolome of Ateneo, Christian Galedo of NU and Gelmart Ilao for most stolen bases; Lozada for most runs batted in (RBIs); and Edward Landicho as best hitter and best slugger.

"The boys were determined to win because an Adamson comeback is possible," said UST head coach Jeffrey Santiago, who won a second title for UST in three seasons.

After Roger Landicho scored on a catching error by UST second baseman Julius Gerona in the third, Robles settled down to keep the Falcons at bay. *With a report from J. Payo*

SPORTSWATCH

Thai Chinarat outshines Juvic

PAGUNSAN

PHUKET, THAILAND—INDIA'S JEEV MILKHA SINGH walked away with another accolade to add to his growing stature when he was named the Johnnie Walker Asian Player of the Year for 2006. Singh was honored at the Johnnie Walker Golf Awards on Saturday night at the Sheraton Grande Laguna Hotel here, which coincided with this week's staging of the prestigious Johnnie Walker Classic at Blue Canyon Country Club. Local hero Chinarat Phadungsil was picked as the JW Asian Rising Star, beating Juvic Pagunsan of the Philippines for the award. Singh won four times around the world last year. He sweetened his year by lifting his first Asian Tour's Order of Merit title. Chinarat, 18, is one of Asia's most promising talents. Last year, he triumphed at the Crowne Plaza Open in China. He bested Filipino Pagunsan, the Asian Tour's Rookie of the Year, in a close balloting.

Pole vault, horse racing PSA Forum topics

POLE VAULT AND HORSE RACING BANNER THE TOPICS OF DISCUSSION in tomorrow's session of the PSA Forum at the main function room of the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. Southeast Asian Games medalist Emerson Obiena will be on hand to talk about the coming Pole Vault Festival to be held under the auspices of the Philippine Pole Valut Association under Obiena himself. Also invited to talk about horse racing is award-winning horse owner Hermie Esguerra, recipient of a fifth straight Owner of the Year title recently from the Gintong Lahi Awards. Aired over dzSR Sports Radio 918 and sponsored by Pagcor, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Manila Sports Council chief Arnold "Ali" Atienza, the weekly public sports program starts at 10:30 a.m.

Enriquez tops Meralco charity cockfest

HOTELIER-SPORTSMAN BIBOY ENRIQUEZ CLINCHED THE CHAMPIonship in last Saturday's "Sabong For A Cause 4-cock derby" at Meralco Gymnasium in Ortigas, Pasig, as his Tanay entry posted four victories in as many fights, to best 50 participants in the P1-million event. Putting a premium on speed, Enriquez decided to field McLean roundheads and Kelso battlecrosses, which routed older opponents. A veteran of countless derbies and also a former World Slasher Cup champion, Enriquez is one of the many prominent luminaries who supported the cockfight derby organized by Meralco top brass Manolo Lopez for the benefit of the Meralco Foundation.

Pacquiao 5-cocker attracts big-timers

BOXING SENSATION MANNY PACQUIAO'S LATEST FORAY INTO COCKfight hosting drew an impressive lineup of cockers who will see action today in the Super Pacman 5-cock derby at the Makati Coliseum. The event starts at 5 p.m. with 85 fights on tap. Sponsors are B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador. Promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. expect a tough battle among top enthusiasts in the country. On March 10, the fifth leg of the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines 5-cock derby unfolds at the Makati Coliseum. For other inquiries, please call 8963545 and 8956475.

Roligon derby stakes P2 million

ROLIGON MEGA COCKPIT'S KING OF THE RING 5-COCK DERBY, WHICH stakes P2 million but requires a minimal entry fee, sizzles on April 12, 14 and 16. Several cockers and breeders have already pledged their entries. Meanwhile, the "No Entry Fee Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan, designed for small-time cockers and hackfight enthusiasts only, unfolds tomorrow with P100,000 in guaranteed prize at stake. The fastest win champion shall get P20,000 and a refrigerator. For inquiries, call 8512275; 8331638 and 8529812 (look for Jona, Shirley or Tiling).

Mavs win 15th straight

DIRK Nowitzki (right) shoots and gets a foul off Dwight Howard. AP

DALLAS—THE STREAKING DALLAS Mavericks won their franchise-record 15th successive game on Saturday, Jason Terry's 29 points and 15 assists helping them beat the Orlando Magic 103-98.

The Mavericks (50-9) have won 50 of their last 55 games after starting the season with four straight losses, and have 22 straight wins at home, another team record.

The latest was not easy, however, as the Magic pushed them all the way, tying the game at 96-96 on two free throws from Jameer Nelson with 1:57 left in the fourth quarter.

But the Mavericks responded with five straight points, becoming the sixth fastest team in history to get to the 50-win plateau in a season.

Josh Howard's 3-pointer with 1:30 left gave Dallas a 101-96 lead and the Magic could get no closer than three points in the final 90 seconds, Dirk Nowitzki's basket with 7.9 seconds left sealing the win.

Nowitzki said he was not overly impressed with the team's record, as Dallas looks to avenge a loss in the NBA Finals to Miami last year.

"If we go 82-0, it doesn't mean anything if we don't win the championship," Nowitzki told reporters. "We know we have a lot of work to do until then."

Playing their third game on the road in four nights and back-to-back after losing in San Antonio on Friday, the Magic opened a 42-40 lead at the half and led 81-75 early in the fourth quarter after starting the final 12 minutes with nine unanswered points.

But the Mavericks kept their composure and answered the early fourth-quarter surge by Orlando with a 12-3 run of their own to regain the lead.

Nowitzki finished with 24 points, nine rebounds and seven assists for the Mavericks, who have beaten Orlando nine straight times. Howard added 21 points for Dallas, which shot 54 percent.

Dwight Howard had 25 points and 10 rebounds for Orlando (28-33), and Hedo Turkoglu added 19 points.

LeBron James had 36 points to help the Cleveland Cavaliers to an easy 120-97 win over the Toronto Raptors.

The lowly Boston Celtics won their third straight game, snapping New Jersey's three-game winning streak by beating the Nets 96-88 in overtime.

The Detroit Pistons won for the 12th time in 14 games, getting 19 points and nine assists from Chauncey Billups in a 92-89 victory over the Memphis Grizzlies.

The San Antonio Spurs won their season-high eighth straight game, Tom Duncan scoring 26 points in a 97-74 win over the Houston Rockets.

Reuters

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS: Boston 96, New Jersey 88, OT; New York 104, Atlanta 100, OT; Cleveland 120, Toronto 98; Detroit 92, Memphis 89; San Antonio 97, Houston 74; Dallas 103; Orlando 98; Sacramento 104, Portland 96; LA Clippers 87, Indiana 64

Marquez breaks foe's nose, takes WBC crown

CARSON, CALIFORNIA—RAFAEL MARQUEZ took the WBC super bantamweight crown from Israel Vazquez when Vazquez had to quit after seven rounds because of a broken nose on Saturday.

Marquez landed a straight right in the first round that broke Vazquez's nose and buckled the champion's knees momentarily.

Although he was having difficulty breathing, Vasquez caught Marquez with a left uppercut to knock him down in the third round.

"I was only able to breathe through my mouth and that's why I was taking a lot of shots," Vazquez said through a translator. "When I came back to my corner the last round, I couldn't breathe at all and I told Freddie (Roach, trainer), that's it."

Marquez didn't realize he had broken Vazquez's nose and was surprised when the referee ended the fight. Vazquez immediately came over to congratulate the new champion.

"I was surprised when he stopped it because he had dropped me in the (third round). I thought it was close," Marquez said, also speaking through a translator.

Both fighters said they would like to have a rematch.

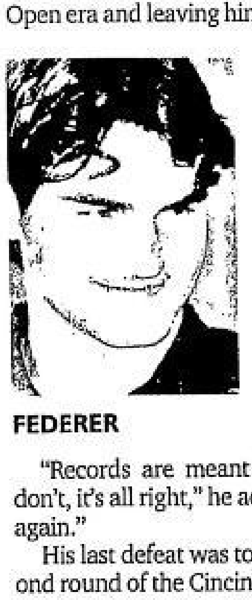
Mexico's Marquez (37-3, 33 knockouts) was ahead on two judges' cards through seven rounds, and the third had it even. Vazquez, who was born in Mexico City and lives in Los Angeles, was 41-4, with 31 knockouts.

"He (Vazquez) told me right after the first round that his nose was broken," Roach, also Manny Pacquiao's trainer, said. "He wanted to stop a couple of rounds earlier, but I told him to suck it up because I thought Marquez was tiring." *AP*

Federer defeats Youzhny, nears streak record

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES—TOP-seeded Roger Federer won the Dubai Open for the fourth time in five years by beating Mikhail Youzhny of Russia, 6-4, 6-3, in Saturday's final.

Federer won his 41st straight match, tying Bjorn Borg for the fourth-longest streak in the Open era and leaving him five short of Guillermo Vilas' 1977 record. Ivan Lendl (44 in 1981-82) and John McEnroe (42 in 1984) are also in front of Federer.



FEDERER

"I am on a nice roll right now and I am playing in Indian Wells next," Federer said. "I have won there the last three years, so hopefully I can win again and beat Vilas' record there.

"Records are meant to be broken—but if I don't, it's all right," he added. "I will start all over again."

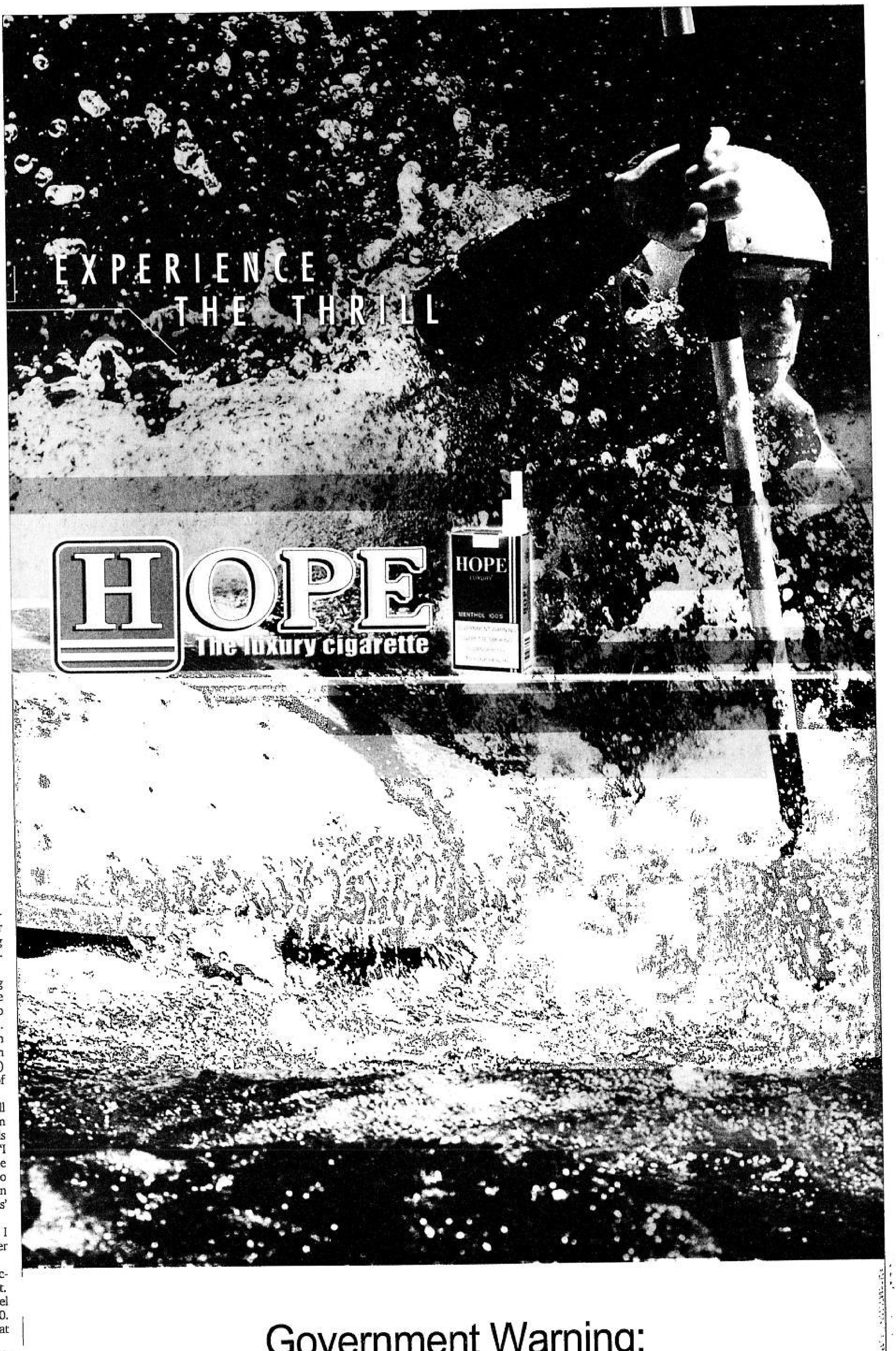
His last defeat was to Andy Murray in the second round of the Cincinnati Masters last August.

Federer, who lost in last year's final to Rafael Nadal, extended his record over Youzhny to 9-0. Youzhny, who won in Rotterdam last week, beat Nadal in the quarterfinals.

Youzhny broke Federer in the first game with a crosscourt forehand and held serve to lead 2-0. But Federer broke in the fourth, eighth and 10th games to close out the first set.

"I must admit that Mikhail put a lot of pressure at the start of the match, and I really needed to step up my game," Federer said. "I am delighted that I have managed to win here again.

In the second set, Federer broke in the second and sixth games. *AP*



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Classy win for Mendoza in Clark Sprint Duathlon

REIGNING ASIAN DUATHLON CHAMPION Ryan Mendoza took command early and then left his biggest rivals gasping in his wake to rule the second leg of the 2007 Clark Sprint Duathlon Series in Clark Field, Pampanga.

The 30-year-old Air Force enlisted man finished the 5K run-30K bike-5K run in 1 hour, 30 minutes and 18 seconds, almost five minutes clear of national teammate Augusto Benedicto.

Benedicto negotiated the distance in 1:35:00 and beat national triathlon champion George Vilog (1:37.22) to second in the 90-strong field.

"Actually, *wala pa kaming* (we don't yet have) proper training," said Mendoza. "*Hinihintay pa rin namin yung* (We are still waiting for our) release from our service command."

Mendoza, a native of Pampanga, said he and his teammates need to step up training now for the Asian Duathlon Championship and the Southeast Asian Games in December, both in Thailand.

In the women's race, teener Annalisa Dysangco and veteran Popo Nagtalon-Remigio showed up with former junior triathlon champion and national duathlon member Kaye Lopez. The event was the first leg of the series organized by Melvin Fausto of CMG.

"I wanted to improve my run legs after I had a sprain three weeks ago, but of course what happened was an additional motivation for me," said Dysangco, the pretty duathlete from UP-Diliman who clocked 1:54.31.

She seized the lead from Nagtalon-Remigio halfway through the bike leg of the competition supported by Clark Development Corp. Tourism Department, Alaska and McDonald's-Clark.

Nagtalon clocked 1:55.46 while another national team member Monica Torres took third place in 1:59.57.

Other age group champions: John Olayoan in the 16-19 age group (1:42.41); Joseph Rana, 20-24 (1:53.38); Joseph Millanes, 25-29 (1:37.44); Abe Tayag, 30-34 (1:47.31); Rico Ayson, 35-39 (1:48.22); Luis Gabino Urrutia, 40-44 (1:49.55); Brian McCreath, 45-49 (1:50.11); Alfredo Santos, 50-54 (2:30.33); Chris Arrowsmith, 55-59 (2:36.05); and Brigilio Balaba and Tirso de Luna, 60-over (2:10 and 3:00.02, respectively); Calum McCreath, under-10 kiddie (31.51); Josh Pe Benito, 11-15 (23:24).

Young Benitez on fast lane to karting glory

JAVI Benitez bags three titles in the 2007 Golden Wheel Awards

TO BE FETED alongside the finest drivers in local motorsports is already an achievement for one who is relatively new in the racing circuit.

And Javi Benitez knows he has time on his side. Mind you, this superb karter is just 12.

The talented Benitez bagged three plums in last week's Golden Wheel Awards, three reasons why the prodigious Grade Six student at Xavier School is keen on bettering himself in the coming racing season.

He was honored with the ROK Junior first runner-up award for his feat in the 2006 Shell Super Karting Series and for bagging third place overall in both the ROK Junior and the Junior Open 125 races at the Asian Karting Open Championship series, which culminated in Macau last December.

The son of Albee and Nikki Benitez enjoys the corporate backing of Bingo Bonanza Corporation, Henry Sy, Jr of SM companies and Willy Ocier of Pacific Online Systems Corp. and Belle Corp.

"It was really awesome to be feted alongside the country's champion drivers in the Golden Wheel," said the young Benitez. "It inspires me to go on and equal or surpass their achievements. I'm very blessed to have very supportive parents."

His personal coach, Elson Carpio, is optimistic about Javi's future in motorsports.

"It was only his debut season in the international scene and yet he delivered," Carpio said. "Had he not missed the Malaysian leg, he could have been the overall champion."

Gabica, Kiamco keep clean slates

FILIPINOS ANTONIO GABICA AND WARREN Kiamco continued their winning ways by demolishing their respective rivals in the 8-Ball Championships of the 14th Annual US Bar Table Championship at the Sands Regency hotel in Reno, Nevada.

According to a report in the AZbilliards.com, Gabica, the reigning Asian Games 9-ball gold medalist, set up a clash with American Bill Ganne by besting Justin Whitehead, Glenn Atwell, Rafael Martinez, Matt Bryan and Tinsley Johnson.

Already the winner of the 9-ball event for which he pocketed $6,000 (P296,000) on Friday, Kiamco nipped Mike Haas, Frank Crossman, Jason Williams, Trevor Smith and Jeremy Smith to forge a duel with Jeff Whitehead.

Gandy Valle and Filipino-Canadian Edwin Montal, however, got the boot.

Valle dropped successive matches to John Herron and Ernesto Dominguez, while Montal bowed to Matt Bryan in the winner's bracket and to Sal Butera in the one-loss side.

Still in contention is Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat who clustered four straight wins in the loser's brackets.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

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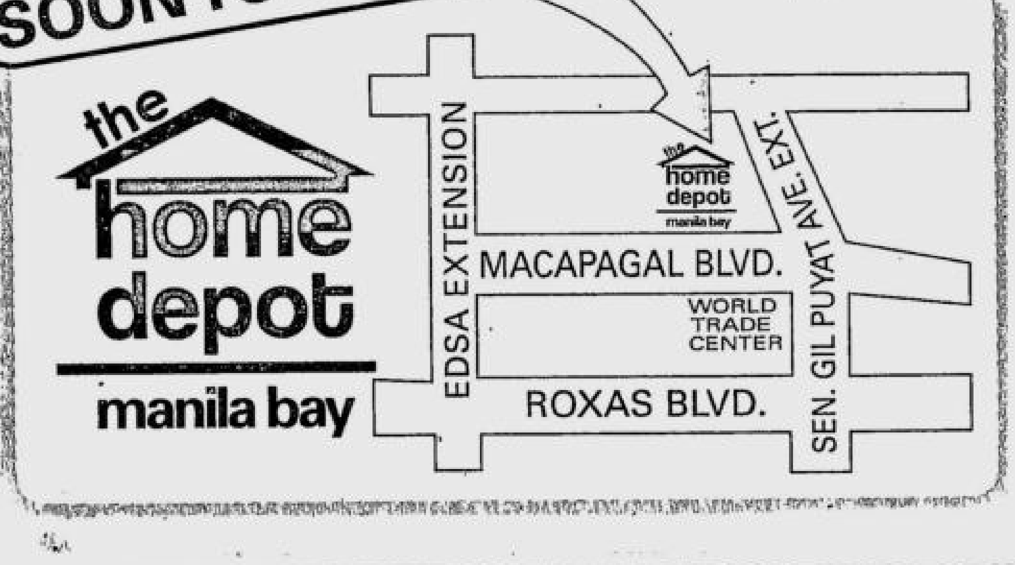

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Alsons, Thai firm eye $350-M power project

Aboitiz may also join 200-MW Davao venture

By Doris C. Dumlao

A CONSORTIUM LED BY ALSONS CONSOLIDATED RE-sources Inc. and the Electricity Generating Public Company of Thailand (Egco) plans to build a $350-million, 200-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Davao before the year ends.

Alsons chief finance officer Luis Ymson Jr. told the INQUIRER that the Aboitiz group and Toyota Tsusho might also take part in the project.

Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. and Toyota Tsusho, through subsidiary Tomen Power, are also Alsons and Egco's partners in two other power plants in Mindanao.

"The time to start is now. There will be higher demand in the next two to three years," Ymson said, noting that the targeted financial closing for the project was this November.

"We're now preparing the equity for the project. It will take three years to construct the power plant so we'll finish construction by 2010," he said.

Conal Holdings Corp., a joint venture between Alsons and Egco, controls 55 percent of Western Mindanao Power Corp., which operates a 100-MW facility in Zamboanga, and Southern Philippines Power Corp., which runs a 50-MW power plant in General Santos. AEV and Tomen Power own 20 percent and 25 percent, respectively, in both companies.

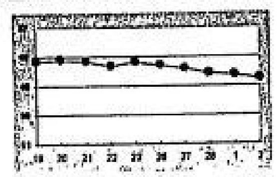
He said the same proportion of ownership was being considered for the proposed power plant in Davao, which would require an initial equity of $100 million.

Asked how the construction of the new power plant would be financed, Ymson said: "We have existing cash flow from the two power plants we already own. We will use dividends from that, then we'll probably raise some

ALSONS/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



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STOCK MARKET

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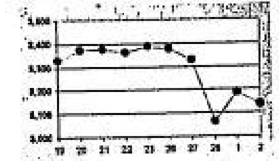

(See stock market report on Page B6)

Cautious trading seen

INVESTORS ARE EXPECTED TO REMAIN cautious this week as the stock market remains vulnerable to external shocks.

"We think this is a period of consolidation for the market. We are awaiting a catalyst,"

SHARES/ B2

IN THIS ISSUE
Identity theft a threat, Oracle says /B5
Gov't out to cut series of failed Transco biddings /B4
Gov't eyes P40B for infra projects /B12

Sale of more PNOC-EDC stake eyed

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

STATE-LED PHILIPPINE NATIONAL Oil Co. (PNOC) is planning to raise at least P15 billion this year from the sale of another 3 billion shares or 20 percent of geothermal energy producer PNOC-Energy Development Corp.

PNOC president Pedro Aquino Jr. said during a roundtable session with the INQUIRER business staff last week that the sale would likely happen after June 13 this year, when the lock-up period on the sale of more PNOC-EDC shares ends.

PNOC-EDC raised P16.7 billion from its initial public offering of 5.2 billion shares last December, touted as the biggest IPO last year. PNOC-EDC also listed a total of 15 billion in outstanding shares.

Half of the estimated P15 billion in proceeds from the additional offer this year will be given to the government as its share in the asset privatization program. Part of the other half will be used to reactivate PNOC's renewable energy business.

To support this plan, PNOC will change the primary purpose of one of its subsidiaries, PNOC Dockyard and Engineering Corp., from a shipyard facility to that of a company that will hold interests in renewable energy such as solar, wind and hydroelectric power as well as biofuels.

PNOC–EDC is a wholly owned subsidiary of PNOC, a state-holding com-

SALE/ B6

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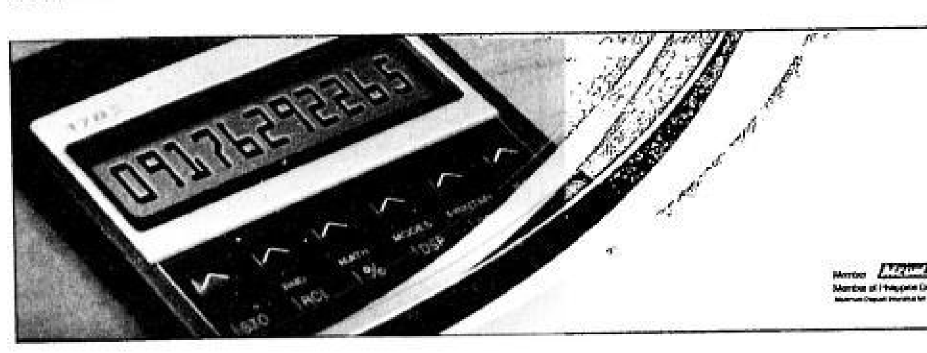

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Interest rates 'artificially low,' says Neda chief

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT'S CHIEF economic planner believes local interest rates have fallen to "artificially low" levels and should stabilize a bit higher at about 1-2 percentage points above the country's inflation rate.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said the fall in interest rates to historical lows would hopefully create demand for bank loans, allowing the rates to stabilize at a slightly higher level.

"You want it to stabilize at the right equilibrium because right now it's too low. It's artificially low. It's below inflation so there's a negative yield," said Neri, who is also a member of the policy-making Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

A negative yield, which discourages savings, means that earnings from fixed income instruments like deposits, bonds or other savings instruments are simply eroded by the inflation rate or the average increase in the price of major consumer goods.

"If inflation is about 3-3.5 percent, interest rates will probably hover at 5 percent," Neri said.

As of the last government auction, the average 91-day treasury bill rate—the benchmark used by banks in pricing loans—had eased to 2.885 percent from 3.008 during the previous auction. This was below the 3-3.6 percent annual inflation rate expected by the BSP for the month of February.

The year-on-year inflation rate had softened to a four-year low of 3.9 percent in January.

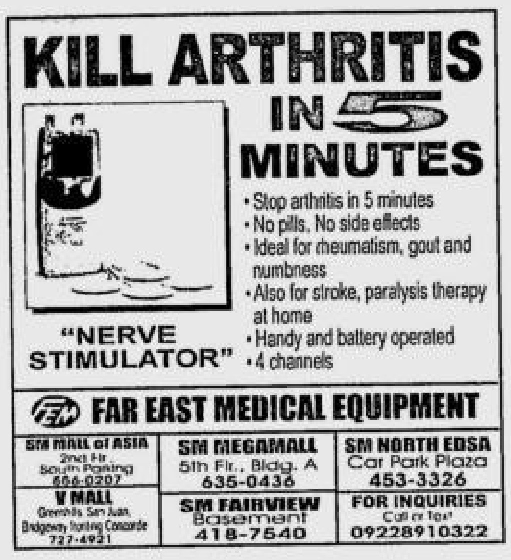
"What we're trying to see now is how the banks will react to this low interest rate environment. I've asked the central bank to look at the scenarios so we can be prepared," Neri said.

To force the banks to lend out instead of park most of their funds with the BSP, the monetary institution has revived the tiering system on short-term money starting last November. Under the scheme, the BSP pays a lower rate on its borrowings in excess of certain levels. Only the first P5 billion gets paid with the 7.5-percent overnight borrowing rate. The next P5 billion yields 200 basis points less at 5.5 percent and anything in excess of P10 billion yields 400 basis points lower at 3.5 percent.

But the national government, through the Bureau of the Treasury, has not been borrowing much from the local market, Neri said, noting that the government should have reduced its offering during its fresh global bond foray in January.

"We borrowed $1 billion. That might even be too much for us. We should have borrowed more from the domestic market," he said.

"The BSP has done a lot. Treasury should do its part, borrow domestically," he noted.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Dondi Gomez, Category Director for Skin and Deodorants and Head of Marketing Training, Unilever Philippines

Session 3: How To Formulate Your Brand DNA for Success
Weena Pineda, VP-Corporate Marketing, Splash Holdings

Session 4: How To Benefit From In-Store Consumer Behavior
Benedicto Cid, Managing Director, AC Nielsen Philippines

Session 5: How Suppliers Can Maximize Retail Investment
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Where is our growth coming from?

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Cielito F. Habito

THE GOVERNMENT HAS APPARENTLY BEgun to take more seriously the common lament that the supposed improvement of the Philippine economy is not being felt by nor benefiting the wider majority of Filipinos. Economic Planning Secretary Romy Neri has acknowledged that the good news in the economy has largely been in the financial realm, particularly reflected in the equity and currency markets. But very few are actually benefiting from such good news. Much more work is needed, he admits, to spread the benefits of the improving economy.

Two out of three

In my economic briefings, I consistently emphasize the three basic indicators that affect the common people most directly: prices, jobs, and income—reflected in the inflation rate, unemployment and underemployment rates, and GDP growth rate. There's generally good news on two but bad news on one. The trends on inflation and GDP growth have been generally positive, but the already bad jobs situation even worsened in 2006. The unemployment rate rose to an annual average of 7.9 percent, up from 7.7 percent the previous year. New job creation averaged 650,000 in 2006, even less than the 699,000 new jobs created the year before, and continues to fall far short of the one million new job-seekers entering the labor force every year. Underemployment rose by 1.7 percentage points to 22.7 percent. Clearly, we need to ramp up our ability to generate new and better-quality jobs in the economy.

Even on the two items where the news is generally good, it must be qualified that we're still falling short of most of our close neighbors. Only Indonesia had a worse inflation record last year (they were in the double digits); the rest of our dynamic neighbors had even more stable prices than we had. Our GDP growth, respectable as it may be, was still near the bottom of the pack, as the economies of most of our Asean and Asian neighbors grew even faster than ours did.

Growth breakdown

The question that continues to puzzle many is why our growing economy is not able to generate enough jobs to gainfully employ all new labor force entrants.

The key to the seeming puzzle is to examine more closely where the growth in the economy is coming from. Is growth coming from labor-intensive industries, i.e. those that tend to generate more jobs as they grow? Or are we getting the growth mostly from industries that are inherently less job-creating (more capital-intensive)? Is the growth coming from regions where the larger numbers of workers are? Is the growth coming from industries that require the skills that are available in the labor force?

To shed some light on these questions, I did some calculations on the national income accounts data, broken down by industry, by expenditure category, and by region of the country. Data on the breakdown of available job skills in the labor force are not as readily available, so I leave that aspect out of my analysis for now.

The picture I am getting shows a general mismatch between the sectors and regions where most of our economic growth is happening, and where the jobs are needed most.

Sectoral mismatch

According to the data, agriculture accounts for 36.7 percent of our workers, or well over a third. Unfortunately, the farm sector contributed a measly 8.2 percent of the growth in the economy in the last quarter, or a mere 0.4 percentage point out of the 4.8 percent total growth posted by the economy. Meanwhile, the biggest sectoral contributors to growth were manufacturing and trading (wholesale and retail), each accounting for 1.1 percentage points or about 22.5 percent each of the growth. But manufacturing provides only 9.2 percent of the jobs in the economy, while trading accounts for 18.8 percent. In other words, the two sectors that account for close to half (45 percent) of the economy's growth employ only about one-fourth (28 percent) of our workers. If we add transport, communication and storage (0.7 percentage points or 14.5 percent of the growth, 7.4 percent of labor force), then 60 percent of the growth is coming from sectors that provide only 35.4 percent of jobs. Little wonder, then, why the jobs were not forthcoming as much as they should, even with good growth numbers.

Geographic imbalance

What about the regional breakdown? The numbers show that the biggest contributor to the economy's growth is—surprise, surprise—Metro Manila, accounting for 44.7 percent of the growth, or 2.3 percentage points out of the 4.8 percent GDP growth rate. A far second (8.6 percent of the growth) is Region 6 (Western Visayas), followed by Region 7 (Central Visayas), contributing 8.5 percent. Together, the three regions accounted for 61.8 percent of the economy's growth—and yet account for only 29.2 percent of the jobs. If we look at Metro Manila and the surrounding provinces of Regions 3 and 4, they account for 61.2 percent of the growth, but only 38.7 percent of the jobs. The growth, in short, is not occurring where the jobs should be.

This is what worries me about the disproportionate attention and public investments being poured into the so-called Subic-Clark-Metro Manila triangle. It may indeed buy us growth—up to 7 percent, if our friend and now Presidential Chief of Staff Joey Salceda would have his way—but growth for whom?

Comments are welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

Alsons, Thai firm eye $350-M ...

From page B1

from IFC (International Finance Corp.)"

IFC is the private sector financing arm of the World Bank.

The consortium has yet to finalize the location of the new power plant but has shortlisted possible sites within the Davao provinces.

"It depends on where the coal will come from, whether from mine mouth or imported from Indonesia. So it will determine whether it will be inland or beside the port or beside the sea," Ymson said.

The first site being considered was in Davao Oriental, the country's easternmost province facing the Pacific Ocean.

"But now, we're also considering mine mouth (as coal source), so it could also be near Sarangani," Ymson said.

Sarangani, a 5th class municipality in Davao del Sur, is one of the areas in Mindanao touted to have large unexplored coal deposits.

Coal is a sought-after energy source worldwide because of its abundant supply and cheaper price. Now that clean coal technologies are available, the Philippine government encourages investment in coal exploration and development to help the country attain energy self-sufficiency.

The Philippines is largely a coal-consuming country with coal having a high contribution to the power generation mix at 27 percent in 2005. But the building of coal-fired power plants always faced stiff opposition from environmental groups.

Alsons, owned by the Alcantara family, has major investments in energy and power, property development, and product distribution.

Cautious trading seen

From page B1

said Vitorrio Gomez, head of trading at RCBC Trust.

He added that while economic fundamentals remained solid, the heavy selling last week showed that the stock market was still susceptible to external factors.

AB Capital Securities said some volatility could be expected this week. "Further downside risks are imminent given the decline in global risk appetite especially after a correction of this magnitude. Note that emerging markets such as the Philippines cannot be decoupled from major shocks brought about by developed markets," AB Capital Securities said.

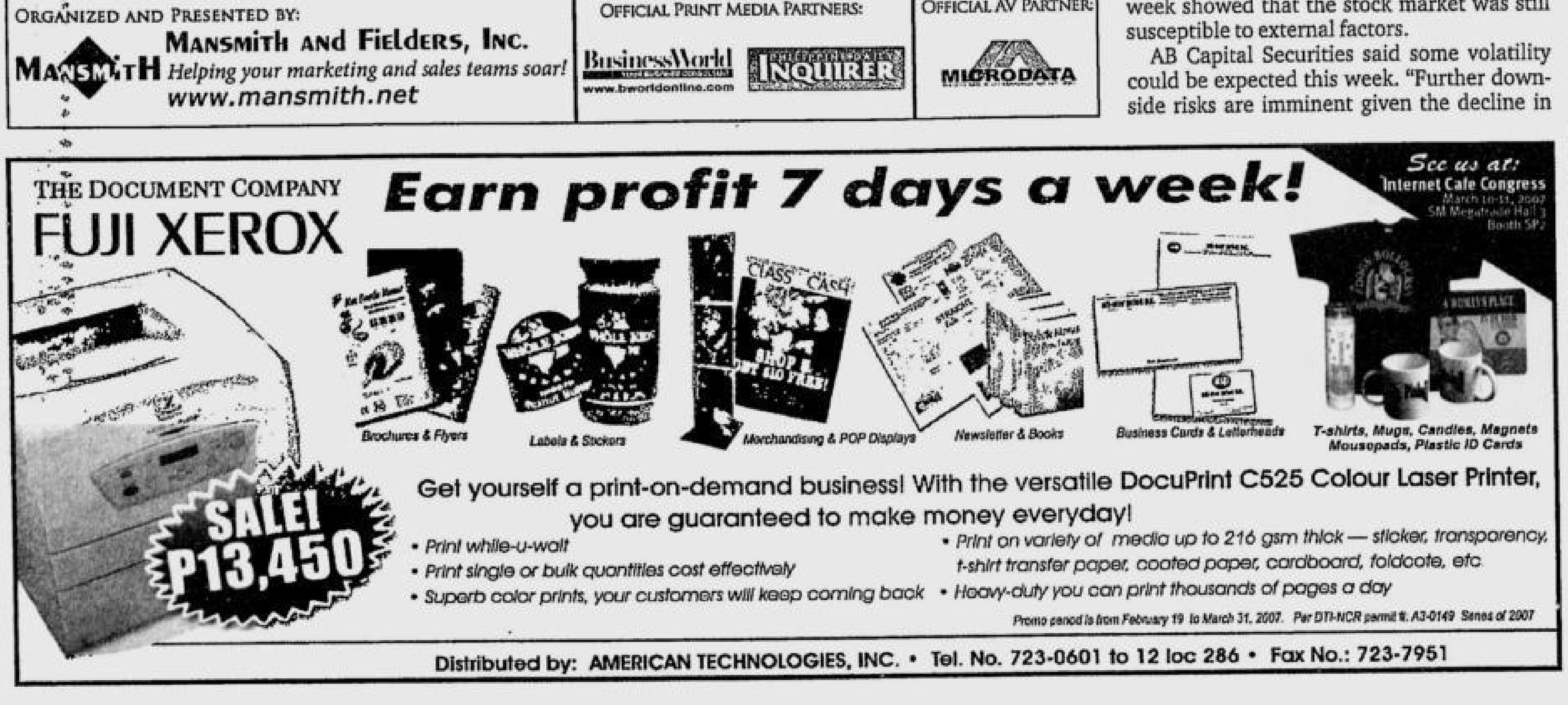
The online broker said that the PSE index was still up by 6 percent this year and the volatility it has seen may taper off in the weeks ahead.

"Although the market was shaken by the record decline in global equity prices, it hasn't changed anything regarding the country's fundamentals. It has taken its toll on the sentiments and investor confidence but it should not have an immediate impact on the economy. On the cautious side, a further downturn in global equities can potentially result to a reversal on the technical charts. For now, investors should not get nervous and sell out at a possible bottom. Instead, we should look at this as an opportunity and focus on bargain hunting," AB Capital Securities said.

Global equities saw one of its steepest declines last week, triggered by a massive sell-off in China's stock market.

The Shanghai Composite index fell close to 9 percent on Tuesday, just days after it established a new all-time high. Fears of an irrationally exuberant market and an overheating economy forced officials to step in to keep things in control, AB Capital Securities noted.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson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Strong peso weakens confidence of Japan firms

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE STRENGTHENING OF THE PESO against the dollar has taken a toll on the country's attractiveness to investors as Japanese firms' confidence in the Philippines plunged to negative 13.7 in February.

According to a monthly survey conducted by the Japan External Trade Organization, the February rating worsened by 9.4 points from -4.3 the previous month.

Japanese firms operating here gave the country such ratings amid an overall decline in confidence among respondents in the five original members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, including Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Jetro said a major indicator for the decline was the observed level of confidence in the electric and electronics equipment sector, which at -26.3 was at its lowest level since August 2005.

The agency said this was due to production and inventory adjustment as well as decreasing demand in overseas market brought on by strong local currencies against the dollar.

As for the Philippines, the February rating was the lowest since the -10.1 in July 2006, but the Japanese firm's outlook for the next two or three months hint at an improvement to -3.2 points.

In last month's survey, Thailand suffered the worst with a decline of 19 points to -31.9 while Malaysia's rating dropped 8.9 points to -13.9.

Group leader Singapore's rating also suffered a decline with 8.1 points shaved, but business confidence remained on the positive side at 5.

On the other hand, traditional laggard Indonesia's rating improved 8.7 points to -13.3.

The ratings measure year-on-year changes in business outlook for the month and the two or three months ahead.

Ratings are expressed as diffusion indexes, which show the difference between positive and negative responses.

Philippines-based respondents in the February survey included 190 firms engaged in oil, chemicals, steel, metals, electric and electronic machinery, transportation machinery and other manufacturing concerns as well as construction, real estate, transport, communication, commerce, services and other non-manufacturing activities.

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Metrofund Peak Earner	1.232528	1.51%	10.40%	13.74%
Metro Invest Plus	1.224074	1.52%	10.18%	12.69%
Metro Capital Growth Fund	1.659387	10.37%	40.10%	41.24%
DOLLAR FUNDS				
Metrodollar Phil. Liquid Fund	1.137688	1.50%	6.37%	7.06%
Metrodollar Phil. Bond Fund	1.204011	2.00%	8.32%	9.69%
Metro Dollar Asian Bond Fund	1.055117	1.50%	4.99%	4.27%

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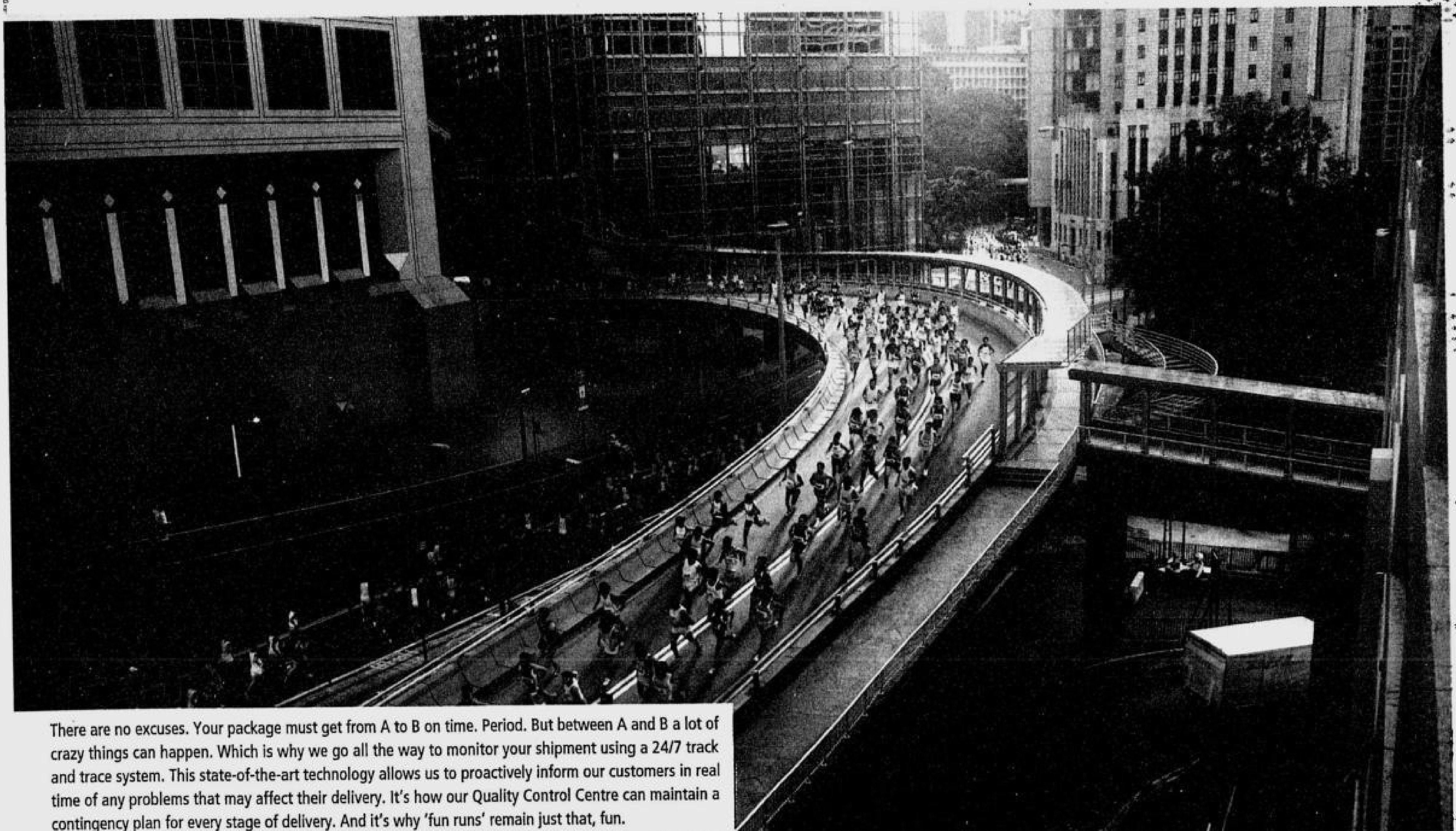

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Gov't out to cut series of failed Transco biddings

Another auction expected as negotiated sale scrapped

By Abigail L. Ho

(First of two parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

THE PHILIPPINES USED TO BE one of the most prosperous nations in Asia in the 1950s and 1960s.

Today, it is competing with the likes of Vietnam and Thailand for much needed foreign direct investments.

But this does not mean that the country is a laggard in all aspects. In the area of power sector restructuring, the Philippines is actually one of the leaders in the region.

The passage of RA 9136, or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (Epira), almost six years ago made the country among the first to really take the plunge and deregulate its power sector.

Even economic powerhouse South Korea had to stop somewhere in the middle of its deregulation efforts to rethink its strategy.

But the Philippines pushed forward.

History of failure

Six years later, however, many of the provisions in the Epira remain unfulfilled.

The country still has among the highest power rates in the region.

Retail competition and open access have yet to be introduced. Only 11 percent of the National Power Corp.'s generation assets have been privatized, and the National Transmission Corp. remains in the hands of the state.

The spotlight is now on the much delayed Transco privatization, which, under Section 21 of the Epira, should have taken place six months after the effectivity of the law.

Transco operates the high-voltage lines that transport power from generation facilities to the distribution firms, which then bring the power to households and other users.

As the systems operator, it also decides the dispatch schedule of power plants.

Gov't-run PSALM made four attempts to privatize Transco with no success

The government, through the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., cannot be accused of not trying to privatize the operation of the nationwide power grid.

In fact, it had tried—and failed—to do so four times.

When the Epira was enacted, the Joint Congressional Power Commission wanted to start the Napocor privatization process by getting a private concessionaire to manage the state firm's just-spun-off transmission functions.

The first attempt to privatize Transco, however, only took place in July 2003 via a public bidding.

But there was apparently not much investor appetite for Transco as Singapore Power Ltd. (SingPower) ended up as the only investor to submit a pre-qualification proposal for the concession.

Undeterred, PSALM conducted another public bidding the following month.

This also went up in smoke.

For the second time, SingPower emerged as the only investor interested in the Transco concession.

Edgardo del Fonso, former finance undersecretary and the first president of PSALM, recalled the uphill climb that PSALM had to undertake.

Back in 2003, the law was still relatively new and the uncertainties seemed too much to whet the appetite of potential investors.

"The lack of a congressional franchise for Transco was a big issue. Another concern involved regulatory issues," he said in an interview.

"The regulatory framework was laden with uncertainties. There was a framework in place, but the implementation of that framework was uncertain," he added.

Prospective investors did not have numbers on which to base revenue forecasts and returns on investment, he said.

The Energy Regulatory Commission back then had yet to come out with computations of Transco's maximum allowable revenue and weighted average cost of capital.

"On that basis, SingPower was the only one willing to bid and take the risk," he said.

The bidding for the 25-year Transco concession contract has been hounded by the lack of a congressional franchise, among others

Apart from those glaring issues, a power sector expert who requested anonymity said there were other factors that contributed to the failure of the first two attempts to privatize Transco.

The two-phase bidding method that the government employed at that time, for one, was flawed.

"It leaves much room for legal issues," the source said.

Under the first phase, PSALM will award to the winning concessionaire the concession to operate, maintain, rehabilitate, expand and finance the country's high-voltage transmission grid. Until a congressional franchise is secured, however, the systems operation function will remain with the government.

The second phase will only start upon the issuance of a congressional franchise to the concessionaire.

By this time, the winning concessionaire will be the one to run the entire transmission system, including systems operation.

A former prospective bidder related that this two-phase system left a lot of room for finger pointing.

"With the two-phase method, a concessionaire will be thrust into a situation where they can only perform systems operations functions upon award of a franchise. It's like buying a new car but not being allowed to drive it. Sure, you can ride the car, but somebody else will drive it for you. In this case, the government," the former bidder said. "If something goes wrong, who's to blame, the government or the concessionaire? There will be finger pointing."

Forced into the situation

But Malacañang seemed to have been forced to adopt that bidding method, as Congress stood by its position to not issue a transferable franchise for Transco.

"The President sees the importance and the urgency of the privatization of the Transco. She knows that something must be done to stop the continuous bleeding of the government resulting from the financial losses of Napocor," Vincent Perez, energy secretary at the time the two-phase system was approved, had said in 2003.

Del Fonso said the non-issuance of a franchise was not a result of lack of effort on the part of PSALM to secure one.

"We worked on it almost every day for a year, but we never got it," he related.

The reason for the non-issuance of a franchise? Congress did not want to issue a transferable franchise to Napocor or PSALM just like that.

It wanted to know who the winning concessionaire would be before releasing a franchise.

"Which made sense," a power sector expert said. "They wanted to be sure that the entity that would get the franchise would do a good job running the transmission grid."

Going into negotiations

With two public biddings already declared failures, the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel issued an opinion to the PSALM board authorizing the government agency to initiate discussions with qualified and interested entities, upon finalization of the negotiation rules and guidelines.

By the first half of December 2003, a team from SPI Powernet, a subsidiary of Singapore Power International, and SingPower subsidiary SP PowerGrid conducted technical due diligence proceedings on Transco.

The government, however, ended up conducting negotiations with three groups: the consortium of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat), the Salim Group and local firm Northeast Development Acquisition Corp.; the group of Tokyo Electric Power Co., American firm Trans-Electric, local conglomerate San Miguel Corp. and Morgan Stanley; and the consortium of Hydro Quebec and SNC Lavalin.

Negotiations went smoothly enough, with the process even reaching the point where each of the bidder's financial bids was opened.

After opening the bids and seeing how much the Transco concession would fetch, however, the government decided to scrap the negotiated sale process and revert to the traditional public bidding system.

The Egat-led consortium, which gave the highest bid of $3.4 billion, questioned the government's sudden decision to scrap the negotiated bidding process, saying there was no transparency in that decision.

But government was quick to defend its decision, saying taking the public bidding route was as transparent as transparent got.

Former bidders had different sentiments, of course.

"After opening the bids and seeing our price offers, they suddenly decided that they're not seeing the negotiations through. They handled that very poorly. Why did they have to go to the extent of opening the bids? It's not going to be easy for them to find investors now," the source said.

Miscommunication

A government source said there should not have been any negotiations in the first place.

"There was clearly miscommunication among the parties involved," the source said, referring to the OGCC opinion giving the go-ahead to negotiate and the government's decision to suddenly scrap the negotiations.

The source related that the PSALM board, at that time, was under the impression that it was okay to go ahead and negotiate since the OGCC issued such an opinion anyway.

And since the negotiations then were "unstructured," the source said it was inevitable that PSALM would be unable to decide on the winning bidder.

"The offers were all so different in many aspects. It was really difficult to compare. And the government really wanted to be transparent about it, since it's the single biggest privatization transaction so far," the source said. "There really shouldn't have been negotiations in the first place." ***(To be continued)***

IN THE KNOW

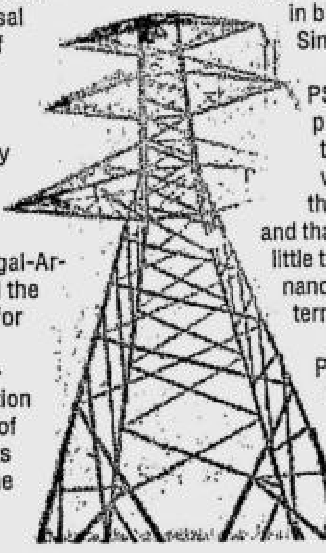
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9136, OR THE Electric Power Industry Reform Act, was passed in June 2001 with the aim of privatizing the assets and liabilities of National Power Corp. (Napocor), among others.

Among Epira's provisions was the creation of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco), whose primary task was to assume the electrical transmission functions of Napocor.

Based on the Act, privatization of Transco should start rolling within six months of the Act's approval.

"Privatization" does not mean the privatization of Transco itself, but its business of operating and maintaining the nationwide grid, which will be in the form of a concession for 25 years, automatically renewable for another 25 years.

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) was created by the Act to take ownership of Napocor's assets and liabilities, and its main purpose is to oversee the sale, disposal and privatization of these assets.



Timeline:

Jan. 27, 2003—then Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. announces that President Macapagal-Arroyo has approved the privatization plan for Transco.

July 15, 2003—Perez says the auction of $2 billion worth of transmission assets failed, after only one bidder, Singapore Power Ltd. (SingPower), showed interest by the July 11 deadline.

Under bidding procedures, a bidding shall be declared a failure in the event that less than two entities submit pre-qualification proposals.

Oct. 23, 2003—Government announces that talks on the privatization had to be moved to the first quarter of the following year, because SingPower was not ready to negotiate.

January 2004—An unnamed Finnish company emerges as a challenger to the erstwhile sole bidder SingPower, amid talks of amending RA 9136 to attract more bidders and speed up the privatization process.

June 29, 2004—Before starting another bidding round, PSALM initiates negotiated bidding for the concession contract.

July 2004—Perez says that the bidding would likely push through, after two other foreign firms—American firm AES Corp. and Australian company TransGrid—also show interest in bidding alongside SingPower.

Sept. 28, 2004—PSALM officials praise bids, say they are "pleased with the quality of the term sheets," and that the bids "leave little to be desired in financial and technical terms."

Oct. 12, 2004—PSALM announces it had scrapped the "negotiated bidding scheme" and had opted for the traditional public auction, saying that the government had found the proposals submitted by the potential investors "highly unique and complex."

Oct. 13, 2004—The consortium with the highest price offer of $3.4 billion, led by the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat), cries foul over the "lack of transparency" in coming out with the decision, calling Perez's reason as "unacceptable" and warned that the country may turn into "a laughingstock in the international community" because of this rules reversal.

Nov. 15, 2006—After moving deadlines for requirements to Sept. 28 and pushing back the auction date to Dec. 20, PSALM identifies pre-qualified bidders as the consortium of Triratna Holdings Corp., Malaysia's Nasional Berhad and Newbridge Asia IV LP; the consortium of Citadel Holdings Corp. and Terna SPA; and the group composed of Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. and China's Stat Grid Corp.

December 2006—Bidding is moved to Jan. 22, and then again to Feb. 5.

Feb. 5, 2007—Bidding declared a failure again, when only one of the three pre-qualified bidders, the consortium of Citadel Holdings Corp. and Italy's Terna SPA Grid Corp., submitted a bid.

Feb. 13, 2007—PSALM announces another round of public auction for Transco; the Citadel-Terna group says it will no longer participate in the next bidding.

Feb. 21, 2007—PSALM head Nieves Osorio resigns, denying that she is leaving the government because of the failed Transco bidding. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

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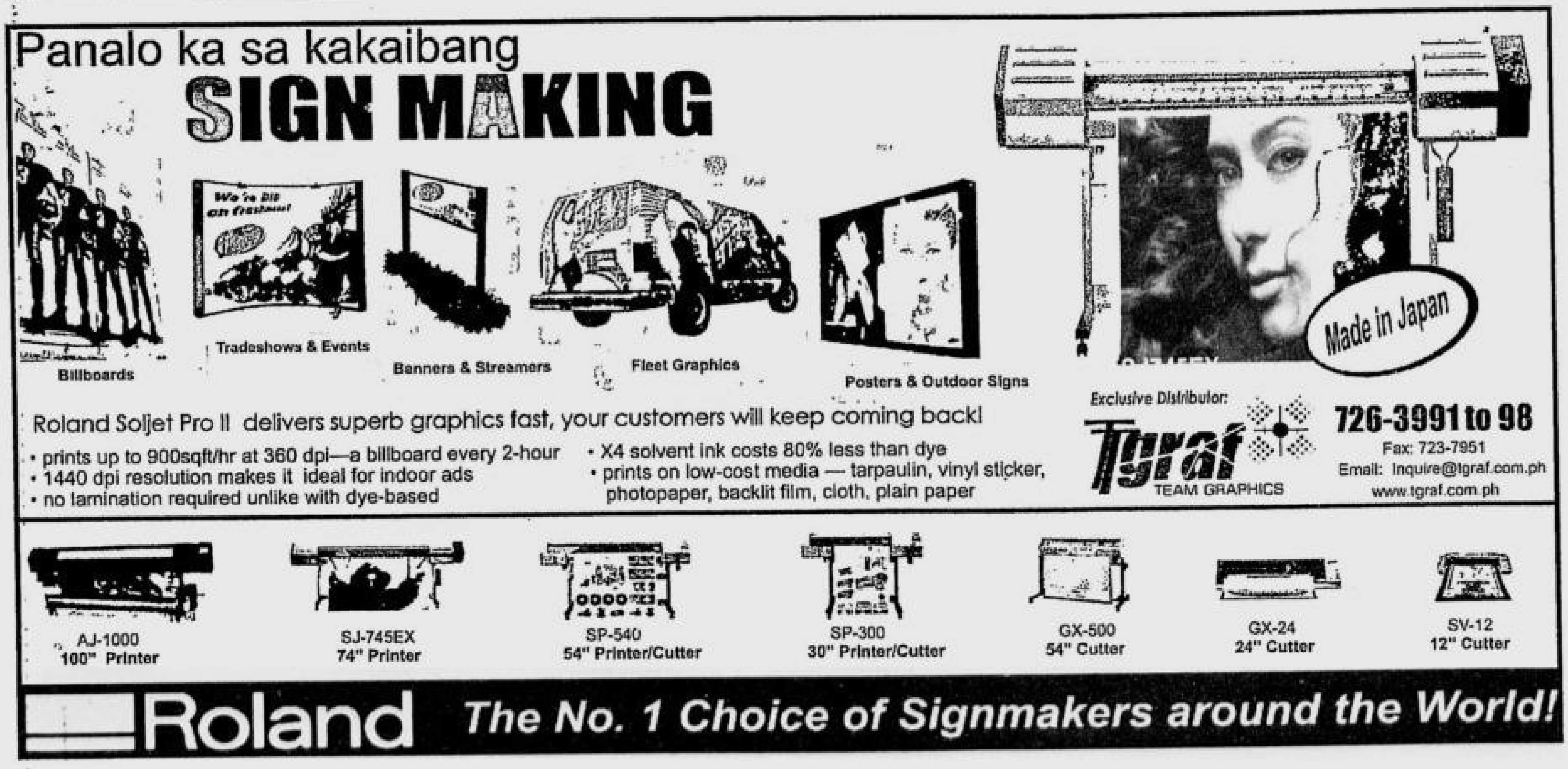

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Identity theft a threat, Oracle says

By Daxim L. Lucas

$2B to be spent on protecting info

IDENTITY THEFT IS A GROWING CONCERN for companies globally and in the Philippines as they begin to embrace greater technology for internal operations and in dealing with clients.

More importantly, the need for so-called "identity management" services is being driven both by the companies' need to satisfy regulatory requirements and the demand of clients for greater security, according to information technology firm Oracle Corp.

In a press briefing, Oracle regional director for security solutions Roman Tuma said that this threat was so significant that companies worldwide were expected to spend up to $2 billion for identity management systems by 2010.

At the same time, Tuma explained that the nature of the threat to the security of corporate information had evolved dramatically over the last decade.

"The threat has intensified, and band-aid solutions are no longer enough," he said.

The Oracle executive pointed out that while attacks on corporate IT infrastructure were often perpetrated by amateur hackers in the past, they were now increasingly being conducted by organized crime elements.

Similarly, companies in the past had to struggle only with the defacement of their websites.

Nowadays, they have to contend with Internet protocol theft, which is aimed at making clients unknowingly reveal critical information.

On top of dealings with clients, Oracle officials explained that there were also growing issues about how the information is handled within the company, specifically which officers have access to information vital to operations.

"This information becomes extremely valuable in the wrong hands," Oracle Philippines chief Francis Ong said.

The IT executives stressed the importance of protecting data by managing access to it, describing potential damage to the company as "horrendous" if they fail to secure it.

"The credibility of a company just goes down the drain because you can't protect your clients' information," Tuma said.

Corn facility up in S. Cotabato

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
Inquirer Mindanao

KORONADAL CITY—CORN PRODUCTION in South Cotabato is expected to get a boost following the completion of a multi-million peso post-harvest facility in Banga town.

South Cotabato is one of the country's leading corn producing areas.

Abusama Alid, director of the Department of Agriculture in Central Mindanao, said the agency shouldered P15 million of the total project cost of P22 million.

The remainder was contributed by the local government.

Alid said Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap led the inauguration last week of the facility, the second of its kind in the country.

The first one was constructed in Kabacan, North Cotabato and was finished in August last year.

The Banga facility, with a total capacity of 200 metric tons, would serve as processing, drying, shelling and trading center for corn farmers in Banga town and nearby areas.

Alid said the Agriculture department bankrolled the project to further improve the condition of corn farmers.

"We realize that corn farmers continue to criticize us due to the lack of a post-harvest facility. The DA had already developed the necessary technology to increase corn production. Now the DA's new mandate is to enhance the corn farmers' profitability," Alid said.

As a trading center, farmers can also sell their produce at the facility for higher prices, he said.

Compared with commercial buyers, the government buying price at the trading center is higher by P1 a kilo.

Private grains traders buy yellow corn at P8.50 a kilo and white corn at P9.50.

Alid said the charges for drying, shelling and storage of corn by farmers were already included in the DA buying price.

He said that the Agriculture department would also construct a similar facility in Malungon, in nearby Sarangani province.

With the government providing post-harvest facilities, Alid said that corn farmers can now focus on production without worrying about their profit.

Currimao gets PPA help

By Hanna Lacsamana
Inquirer Northern Luzon

SAN FERNANDO CITY, LA UNION—The Philippine Ports Authority has beefed up efforts to upgrade and improve major ports in Northern Luzon to boost tourism in the region.

Topping the PPA's list of port development projects is the construction of a P96-million cruise ship berth and a P20-million passenger terminal that will service international passengers in Currimao, Ilocos Norte.

Currimao is 27 kilometers south of Laoag City and local government officials want to develop the port as a transshipment point to major ports in Singapore and Hong Kong.

Silverio Mangaoang, PPA port manager, said the projects were approved in January and construction would start this month.

He said the construction of the passenger terminal would be funded by the PPA.

Mangaoang said the Chinese who recently visited Ilocos Norte had seen the potential of the area as a tourist destination.

The Chinese, particularly those from Taiwan, are attracted to Ilocos because of its beaches and casino in Fort Ilocandia, Laoag City.

According to Mangaoang, the cheapest mode of transportation for the Chinese to reach Northern Luzon is by boat, and the development of the Currimao port's facilities would help bring in more visitors.

The PPA, he said, had allotted P15.1 million for backfilling and causeway construction and P1.9 million for the repair of the administration building.

Mangaoang said the PPA had also released P1.3 million for the fencing of the port in Aparri, Cagayan, and more than P22 million for the improvement of the PPA's facilities in this city.

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NISSAN

RCBC starts overseas roadshow

Bank promotes additional shares offering worth ₱10B

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE YUCHENGCOS' RIZAL COMMERCIAL Banking Corp. will hold a roadshow in key global financial markets—Hong Kong, Singapore, London, New York, Boston and San Francisco—starting this week to drum up investor interest in its additional shares offering worth P10 billion.

A team of RCBC officials led by newly appointed CEO Lorenzo Tan will meet with representatives of more than 100 equity fund management groups which are keen on investing in the bank, RCBC said in a statement.

RCBC plans to sell to offshore investors 173.9 million common shares, or 80 percent of its primary shares offering of 217.4 million.

The international roadshow starts today and will end on March 15. The listing on the Philippine Stock Exchange will be on March 29.

The sole bookrunner and international underwriter is CLSA Ltd. While the bank's investment house subsidiary, RCBC Capital Corp., serves as the domestic lead underwriter.

Including over-allotment, the total offering may reach 250 million in new common shares.

The offer price will be based on the volume weighted average price of the RCBC shares on the PSE for a period of 10 to 30 trading days ending on March 15, according to documents filed with the exchange. The price will be subject to a discount of up to 10 percent.

The trading of shares already listed on the PSE will be suspended on March 16, once the offer price has been finalized, until the listing day of the additional shares.

The domestic underwriter's offering period was set for March 19 to 23. A roadshow for local investors held last Friday was the first leg of RCBC's global roadshow.

Underwriter CLSA firm, in its review of the bank's fundamentals, said: "The recent appointment of young and dynamic banker Lorenzo V. Tan as CEO guarantees strong leadership for years to come. Ongoing emphasis on marketing and improving asset quality should unlock true potential of the bank."

CLSA also said RCBC would likely rise to be among the country's top five banks in terms of assets by year 2012. RCBC is currently ranked ninth biggest bank.

Outlook for PLDT seen getting brighter

By Riza T. Olchondra

ANALYSTS MAINTAINED THEIR positive outlook for Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., mainly because of its growing mobile business and diversification into information technology-related services, business process outsourcing, and e-gaming.

"There will be more rings in favor of PLDT," said Association of Stock Market Analysts of the Philippines director Astro del Castillo.

Del Castillo said PLDT was expected to post bigger profits for 2006 than the P34-billion net profit and P29 billion in core earnings in 2005. Core earnings exclude the impact of currency fluctuations, deferred taxes and other nonrecurring charges.

"The outlook is brighter because of its continued strength in its mobile and landline business, its diversified) approach, its ventures in the broadband and outsourcing business," Del Castillo said. "The growth of the telecom industry as a whole and the general improvement in the economy will no doubt give the company a boost as well."

PLDT, partly owned by Hong Kong-based conglomerate First Pacific Co. Ltd., ended 2006 with a record mobile phone subscribers of 24 million, suggesting it added over a million new users during the fourth quarter. PLDT's wholly-owned subsidiary, Smart Communications, and Smart's listed unit, Pilipino Telephone, closed the third quarter of 2006 with a combined subscriber base of 22.9 million. On March 2, Smart said the combined subscriber base has reached 25 million.

Cellular phone operations account for nearly two-thirds of PLDT's group revenue.

A 2tradeasia.com analyst also said PLDT's 20-percent stake in e-gaming company PhilWeb Corp. and its increased activity in business process outsourcing through ePLDT are expected to provide additional income.

Brittany earmarks ₱5B for condo project in Makati

BRITTANY CORP. IS EARMARKING P5 billion over the next two years for a property development project in Makati, a high-rise residential condominium venture, which will be undertaken in partnership with the Lopez family.

"Brittany is acknowledged as the most innovative developer and purveyor of luxury homes. The same expertise we have been known for in developing creative 'lifescapes' for the trailblazing affluent—as seen in our existing residential projects like Portofino, Crosswinds and Brittany Bay—will be applied to our foray in condo development," said Jing Serrano, president of Brittany Corp.

The Makati condominium, called The Mosaic, is primarily residential but with an appropriate mix of commercial establishments to service the needs of its residents.

The 30-storey high-end condominium is being put up on a property in front of Greenbelt 1.

"Mosaic will have that unique Brittany signature: A fusion of creative ideas coming from the best disciplines in the industry. It will be the first true designer condo in the country and the first high-end condo that applies the concept of centricity, where units within the condominium are sensitively and sensibly planned with specific segments in mind," Serrano enthused.

With Brittany Corp.'s track record in high-end horizontal residential developments, she was confident that the upscale market would be receptive to its offering.

"The competitive environment in Makati seems to be daunting and stiff. One would think it would be more difficult to sell in Makati given the number of choices in this segment. But the local market has evolved over the years. They are now more selective than way back in the 90s. These days, the market puts a premium on design and is on the lookout for creative financing schemes. So it's really not as different as catering to the Metro South. The base is also wider and more diverse which Brittany recognizes as an opportunity to expand our market reach. With Mosaic, we have more young urban professionals, expatriates and local investors," she added.

The Mosaic, Serrano says, is only just the beginning. Greater plans are expected to unfold within the next two years.

"Brittany will be introducing more unique condo concepts within the year, not only in Makati but also in other key commercial and business districts in Manila," Serrano concludes.

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SELLING	
CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	500K
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	100K
CLUB PUNTA FUEGO	380K
EAGLERIDGE B	250K
EAGLERIDGE C	350K
MAKATI SPORTS	200K
MANILA POLO CLUB	PLS. CALL
METROCLUB A	150K
MIMOSA IND.	220K
MIMOSA C-3	600K
MT MALARAYAT A	200K
ORCHARD A	170K
SPA & LODGE	500K
SPLENDIDO B	200K
THE PALMS IND	450K
THE PALMS CORP.	1.1M
VALLE VERDE IND.	80K
WACK WACK	PLS. CALL
OTHERS	PLS CALL

BUYING	
ALABANG A	1.050M
ALABANG B	1.2M
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	550K
CANLUBANG GOLF	PLS. CALL
CEBU COUNTRY CLUB	1.7M
CLUB FILIPINO	90K
EASTRIDGE B	130K
FONTANA D	40K
MAKATI SPORTS	180K
MANILA GOLF CORP	12.8M
MANILA GOLF IND	12.0M
MANILA POLO CLUB	2.8M
MANILA SOUTHWOODS B	660K
MIMOSA IND	200K
SHERWOOD B	100K
SPA & LODGE	450K
STA ELENA A	1.5M
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	650K
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	630K
THE PALMS	PLS. CALL
WACK WACK	7.5M

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Geograce taps JPMorgan as financial adviser

GEOGRACE, A LISTED MINING EXPLORATION firm, signed a financial advisory agreement with international investment house and financial adviser JPMorgan in relation to firm's portfolio of mining tenements.

This developed a day after JP Morgan officials, led by managing director for investment banking Ivor Orchard, paid a courtesy call to Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Angelo Reyes.

In an interview, JPMorgan officials said they were seeing bright prospects for the Philippine mining industry, noting that the right policy framework to attract foreign investments in the Philippines is now in place.

Orchard noted that the global commodities market was enjoying record prices of nickel and that the Philippines has nickel in abundance, aside from gold and copper.

He said "there is a widespread interest in the Philippines as a haven for investment. JP Morgan is considering financing a couple of projects here."

Geograce's nickel tenement portfolio includes those in Zambales, Bukidnon and Palawan.

"We are now in the process of doing geological rapid assessment and soil sampling in various areas in the country. To date, reports indicate sizeable amounts of minerals which we are very happy about," according to senior geologist and director Joe Abaigar of Geograce.

"The signing of JPMorgan with us confirms our reports and findings," Abaigar said.

Sale of more PNOC-EDC . . .

From page B1

pany involved in the development and production of various forms of energy resources in the Philippines.

PNOC-EDC operates geothermal energy projects in Leyte, Luzon, Negros and Mindanao with a total installed capacity of 1,148 megawatts. It is also the sole active developer of geothermal energy and geothermal power projects in the country and at present accounts for about 60 percent of the total installed geothermal energy capacity in the Philippines.

PNOC-EDC said it has set a capital expenditure budget of P2.98 billion for 2007, according to its prospectus filed with the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Of the planned spending, P1.35 billion will go to the first phase of its North Luzon wind power project in Ilocos Norte.

The first phase of the wind power project, which is estimated to produce 20 megawatts of electricity, is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2009 and will be partly financed by the Japanese government under a special yen loan package worth 5.857 billion yen. Phase 1 is expected to contribute 97 gigawatt-hours of electricity annually, which would be equivalent to annual crude oil savings of $9.7 million (at $60 a barrel).

GG&A Club Shares
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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,200,000	-
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,200,000	1,100,000
Anvaya Cove Beach and Nature Club	Please Call	-
Baguio Country Club	600,000	540,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	-
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	60,000	50,000
Camp John Hay	330,000	300,000
Canlubang	450,000	420,000
Capitol Hills	40,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,600,000	1,500,000
Celebrity Sports Club	110,000	90,000
Club Filipino	100,000	90,000
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	90,000	75,000
Forest Hills "B"	150,000	-
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	-
Luisita Golf "A"	350,000	270,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	200,000	180,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	190,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	13,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	11,600,000
Manila Polo	Please Call	2,700,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	320,000	-
Manila Southwoods "B"	750,000	650,000
Manila Yacht Club	250,000	-
Mimosa (Individual)	230,000	200,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	650,000	600,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	180,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	170,000	150,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	300,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "C"	400,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	150,000	140,000
Spa & Lodge	700,000	-
Sta. Elena "A"	-	1,150,000
Sta. Elena "B"	-	1,800,000
Summit Point "A"	280,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	320,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	700,000	630,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Please Call	620,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	-
Valley Golf	200,000	180,000
Wack Wack Golf Club	-	7,300,000

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SHARES AVAILABLE

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B'	1,100,000/Pls. Call'	1,050,000
Alta Vista A/B'/Corp.''	-	300,000/Pls. Call'/Pls.Call''
Baguio Country Club	600,000	-
Camp John Hay	300,000	-
Canlubang Golf	480,000	420,000
Canyon Woods	100,000	-
Capitol Hills	40,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Celebrity Sports	Pls. Call	-
Club Filipino	90,000	-
Eagleridge A/B'/C''	170,000/Pls. Call'/Pls. Call''	200,000'
Eastridge A/B'	150,000'	-
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B'/C''	90,000/150,000'	120,000'
Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	13,000,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,600,000
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	2,700,000
Manila Southwoods A/B'	300,000/Pls. Call'	-
Makati Sports Club A	200,000	-
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	280,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B'	160,000	-
Mimosa Ind./C2'/C3''	220,000	Pls. Call/550,000''
Mt. Malarayat A	190,000	-
Orchard A/B'/C''	160,000/Pls. Call'/950,000''	150,000
Punta Fuego	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Quezon City Sports Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B'/C''	80,000/170,000'/250,000''	Pls. Call'
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Royale Tagaytay CC	65,000	-
Sherwood A/B'/C''	70,000/150,000''	100,000'
Splendido Taal	200,000	Pls. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B'	Pls. Call	-
Subic Golf	180,000	-
Summit Point A	280,000	-
The Palms Country Ck.	380,000	330,000
Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands	380,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	700,000	630,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club A/B'	150,000/180,000'	-
Valley Golf	-	180,000
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	8,000,000	7,500,000

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 2, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	11	11	10.5	10.5	77,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	57	57	55	55.5	3,365,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	66.5	66.5	65	66	1,994,800
China Banking Corp.	870	870	860	870	2,430
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.55	0.55	0.53	0.55	10,710,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	100	100	99.5	99.5	6,710
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	62	62	60.5	61	2,118,400
Philippine National Bank	50	50	49	49.5	103,000
Phil. Savings Bank	64	64	61	62.5	6,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	41	41	39	40	186,400
Security Bank Corp.	78	78	77	77.5	158,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	62	62	59	59	65,500
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.1	6.2	1,659,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	37	37	37	37	20,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1600	1615	1600	1615	180
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.02	2.08	1.96	1.96	781,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	750	755	730	740	13,470
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2050	2070	2050	2065	780
Ivantage Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.58	1.58	1,185,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.9	6	5.8	5.9	10,352,000
First Gen Corp.	52	53	52	53	1,208,200
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	76	76	74	74	1,303,000
Manila Electric Co. A	73.5	73.5	70.5	71	752,400
Manila Electric Co. B	74.5	74.5	70.5	71	1,103,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.3	9.5	9.3	9.4	5,152,000
Petron Corp.	4.45	4.5	4.35	4.5	6,927,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	260,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.32	1.38	1.32	1.38	740,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25	25	25	16,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	51	51	49	49.5	1,764,100
Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	21	21	21	21	67,200
RFM Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.32	341,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	3,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.42	0.45	0.41	0.41	150,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63	64	63	63.5	111,800
San Miguel Corp. B	75	75	75	75	25,800
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.08	2.14	2.06	2.08	821,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.5	17.75	857,300
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.68	1.68	1.62	1.64	33,334,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.7	3,816,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	10,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.6	8.7	8.4	8.7	2,161,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.7	5.9	364,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5	5	4.9	4.95	2,211,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.62	0.65	0.62	0.65	80,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Active Alliance Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.36	0.37	0.34	0.36	36,370,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Asia Amalgamated Holdings	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	20,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	352,100,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	17,000,000
Ayala Corp.	565	570	550	560	248,040
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.73	0.73	460,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.3	8.3	8.2	8.3	4,384,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.0625	0.06	0.0625	10,700,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	806,000
APC Group Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	2,200,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.013	292,500,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.36	1.38	9,790,000
Aries Prime Res. Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	30,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.7	4.05	3.7	3.75	245,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	6.4	6.4	6.1	6.3	591,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.9	9.9	9.8	9.8	27,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.6	3.65	37,579,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.9	7	6.9	7	1,442,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5.3	5.3	5	5.1	1,422,000
F&J Princ.E Holdings Corp.	1	1	1	1	45,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	120,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.6	193,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.5	12.75	834,900
Jolliville Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	40,000
Keppel Holdings	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1,000
Medco Holdings	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.37	320,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	20,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	10	10	9.5	9.7	2,423,600
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.02	2.02	1.94	1.98	467,000
Pacifica	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	1,400,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	8,490,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	50,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	70,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.2	0.205	42,020,000
SM Investments Corp.	360	360	350	360	157,900
South China Resources Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	290,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	110,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	400,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.75	16	15.5	15.75	9,228,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	20,000
Belle Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.34	1.38	16,232,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.18	1.2	1,320,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.45	830,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.85	3.55	3.85	308,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.44	2.5	2.34	2.36	2,888,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	4,440,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.83	0.83	0.78	0.81	78,240,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.74	1.76	1.72	1.76	1,650,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0725	0.075	0.07	0.07	23,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.66	1.68	1.58	1.58	298,711,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	120,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	120,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	1,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	65,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	80,500,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.5	0.5	0.46	0.49	3,320,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.85	0.86	0.84	0.84	4,050,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	300,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.95	3	2.85	2.95	71,582,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.4	4.4	108,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.66	0.95	0.61	0.91	51,560,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	150,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.7	2.7	2.65	2.65	32,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19.25	19.5	19	19.25	4,833,500
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.65	0.65	0.63	0.64	8,600,000
SM Development Corp.	4	4	3.85	3.95	1,199,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.75	11	11.5	18,695,100
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.71	0.73	0.71	0.73	350,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.19	0.16	0.18	91,640,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.75	23.75	23	23.75	117,600
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.74	1.78	9,003,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1320	1380	1320	1370	78,390
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	7.1	7.1	6.9	7.1	4,529,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2400	2455	2365	2415	350,120
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.26	0.26	19,200,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.35	4	3.35	4	246,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	2,500,000
Ionics Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	310,000
IPVG Corp.	6.1	6.2	5.7	5.8	2,336,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	700,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.065	0.07	0.06	0.07	1,270,700,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.7	1.72	1.6	1.72	1,661,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.32	2.4	2.3	2.36	22,000
Philweb Corp.	0.048	0.048	0.046	0.048	365,400,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	30	30	29	29	1,436,600
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	122,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.6	2.75	6,596,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.37	0.37	4,570,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.86	0.89	1,740,000
EDUCATION					
iPeople Inc.	3.4	3.4	3.35	3.35	230,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	5	5	5	5	10,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.8	2.95	2.7	2.95	2,385,000
Paxys Inc.	28	28	26.5	27.5	1,420,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.4	5.4	5.1	5.4	3,793,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.7	5.7	5.3	5.4	856,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	433,400,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.9	9	8.7	8.8	756,000
Benguet Corp. A	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.5	34,700
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.68	1.78	117,753,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.29	16,560,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.35	0.35	0.32	0.35	11,280,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.03	0.028	0.03	639,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.034	0.034	0.032	0.034	333,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.019	0.02	0.018	0.02	3,527,700,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.15	4.15	4	4.1	10,155,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17.5	17.75	17.5	17.5	121,200
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.74	0.74	0.69	0.69	160,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.2	1.24	1.16	1.18	4,659,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.32	3,340,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.014	28,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.014	100,700,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	213,300,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	120,000

CURRENCIES

March 2, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.758380	1.000000	48.5710
Japan	Yen	0.006445	0.008498	0.4128
United Kingdom	Pound	1.485363	1.958600	95.1312
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.097085	0.128016	6.2179
Switzerland	Franc	0.620555	0.818264	39.7439
Canada	Dollar	0.647027	0.853170	41.4393
Singapore	Dollar	0.496582	0.654793	31.8040
Australia	Dollar	0.595789	0.785608	38.1578
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.011725	2.652661	128.8424
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.202272	0.266716	12.9547
Brunei	Dollar	0.494961	0.652656	31.7002
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000109	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022604	0.029806	1.4477
UAE	Dirham	0.206547	0.272353	13.2285
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.318600	64.0457
Korea	Won	0.000805	0.001062	0.0516
China	Yuan**	0.097938	0.129141	6.2725
Argentina	Peso	0.244876	0.322893	15.6832
Brazil	Real	0.357390	0.471254	22.8893
Denmark	Kroner	0.134250	0.177022	8.5981
India	Rupee	0.017205	0.022686	1.1019
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216340	0.285266	13.8557
Mexico	New Peso	0.068002	0.089668	4.3553
New Zealand	Dollar	0.526178	0.693818	33.6994
South Africa	Rand	0.104088	0.137250	6.6664
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023055	0.030400	1.4766

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 1, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of March 1, 2007

RP needs investor-friendly rules on cross-border deals

Move to make forex lib more meaningful

By Doris C. Dumlao

US-BASED FINANCIAL GIANT Citigroup sees the need for the Philippines to follow up recent foreign exchange liberalization initiatives with more investor-friendly rules on cross-border capital transactions.

In a Feb. 26 commentary, Citigroup said, "how the local regulators would craft the implementing rules and regulations on the easing of the outward flow of capital would be important in ensuring policy credibility."

"Higher limits on some capital account transactions do not necessarily remove the roadblocks in facilitating the ease of outward investments of residents or dollar purchases for transactions without documents," the bank said.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas will raise starting April 2 the amount of dollars that banks can stockpile for their own accounts from 2.5 percent of unimpaired capital or $5 million, whichever is lower, to a pre-Asian crisis ratio of 20 percent or $50 million, whichever is lower.

The BSP will also double the cap on offshore investments that residents can pursue without its approval to $12 million, while the limit on retail purchases of foreign exchange for non-commercial purposes such as for offshore travel, education or medical expenses was also doubled to $10,000 from $5,000.

"Sometimes in the Philippines, laws or circulars suggest fairly liberal parameters to engage in cross-border transactions, but the manner in which these regulations are enforced seem to be another layer of restriction," Citigroup said.

"An example includes multiple applications seeking approval for the same private sector proposal earlier approved to buy the same investment grade securities," it noted.

Citigroup said the supporting documents required for submission to process an application, such as for outward investments, should be limited to the minimum essentials.

"Consistent with the policy bias to relax some rules on capital transactions, the approval process including submission of documents should be as investor-friendly as possible," it said.

Despite the higher limit on outward investments, Citigroup said there was no indication of strong pent-up onshore demand for foreign currency assets among retail and institutional investors.

It said the banking system's foreign currency deposit units (FCDUs) had accommodated much of the retail demand for foreign currency assets.

"An improving financial system and a policy environment that muted fiscal risk also contributed to rising dollar deposits," it said.

These FCDU deposits, considered as a second layer of the country's foreign reserves, amounted to $18.2 billion at end-September 2006, up by 15.6 percent over a year ago.

Because of these FCDU deposits, Citigroup said the higher limit for retail dollar purchases would not likely result in a capital flight.

"FCDU gains under the more liberal rules to acquire forex could effectively substitute for BSP's spot market purchases to restrain exchange appreciation. Thus, we think BSP will not have to undertake costly sterilization (mopping up of money supply) operations to prevent any explosion in liquidity from its spot purchases that may lead to asset price bubbles," it said.

Citigroup also hopes that the higher limit of $12 million for outward investment by residents could distract banks and non-financial corporations from diversifying away from non-investment grade Philippine foreign currency sovereign bonds (ROPs).

TAN IN CHINA'S BOOMING HOTEL INDUSTRY
The 40-story Elton Hotel in Shanghai's Pudong District marked taipan Lucio C. Tan's entry into the booming hotel and tourism industry in China. Eton Hotel Shanghai, which opened last Friday, is the first of the several hotel projects planned by the Eton group in China.

Transco power delivery up

By Abigail L. Ho

STATE-RUN NATIONAL TRANSmission Corp. (Transco) registered a 3-percent increase in power delivery to 105,228.4 megawatt-months (MW-months) in 2006 from 102,186.8 MW-months in the previous year.

Power delivery in MW-months refers to the sum of Transco's monthly billing demands for the year.

In a statement, Transco president and chief executive Arthur Aguilar attributed the power delivery boost to the completion of several crucial transmission projects all over the country.

These projects include the San Roque-San Manuel 230-kilovolt (kV) project in Luzon, the additional 50-megavolt-ampere (MVA) transformer at the Wright Substation and the second phase of the Babatngon substation expansion project for the Leyte-Samar Transmission Project in the Visayas, and the Abaga-Marawi 69-kV line 2 project in Mindanao.

"We will do all we can to complete our expansion and capacity addition projects nationwide to further improve power delivery to our customers," Aguilar said.

According to data from Transco's corporate planning group, power delivered to the Luzon grid reached 78,413.9 MW-months, 2.9 percent higher than the 76,198.2 MW-months transmitted in 2005.

URC spending $5M for Nestlé deal

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

UNIVERSAL ROBINA CORP. (URC), the branded snacks food and beverage firm of the Gokongweis, is spending about $5 million to acquire the assets of Nestlé Waters Philippines.

The move will help URC expand its share of the rapidly growing beverage market in the country.

The two companies earlier entered into an agreement providing for the sale of Nestlé assets to the Gokongwei firm. The deal will take effect on April 2.

Under the agreement, Nestlé Waters will sell its natural mineralized water Hidden Spring trademark to URC.

URC will also get the license to bottle Nestlé Pure Life, which will remain a Nestlé brand.

Nestlé director for communications Pedro Dy-Liacco told the INQUIRER that Nestlé's water business "has not performed as expected." This prompted the company to sell its assets to URC which, according to Nestlé people, has the core competence in bottled beverages.

Nestlé Waters will focus on its core businesses, including milk, coffee, food and other beverages, Dy-Liacco said.

URC, for its part, has agreed to hire the majority of the factory-based Nestlé Waters employees to ensure continuity of operations.

Nestlé Waters Philippines will pay all employees a separation package as provided by company policy and the existing collective bargaining agreement.

With the acquisition, URC will expand its portfolio of non-carbonated brands which now include coffee (Great Taste), green tea drinks (C2), sports drinks (Rush) and juices (Nature's Harvest).

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RP-Taiwan trade rose 2% in '06

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TRADE BETWEEN TAIWAN AND THE Philippines increased by 1.97 percent to about US$7.26 billion in 2006 amid continuing efforts to establish a seamless link between their respective freeports.

Data from Taiwan's Government Information Office or GIO showed that Taipei bought from the Philippines last year some $2.78 billion worth of goods, including reimports. This was, however, 0.69 percent lower than the $2.79 billion posted in 2005.

Taiwanese goods sent to the Philippines, including reexports, reached $4.48 billion, increasing by 3.69 percent from year-ago level.

In last year's trading, Taiwan maintained a surplus of about $1.7 billion, increasing by about 11.68 percent from $1.53 billion in 2005.

GIO also reported that the Philippines was Taiwan's 13th largest trading partner in 2006, accounting for 1.7 percent of the island-economy's total global trade for the year, which was valued at $426.7 billion.

Among developing countries excluding mainland China, the Philippines was Taiwan's fifth largest trade partner after Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Indonesia.

China is Taiwan's largest trading partner with a 17.9-percent share of the latter's aggregate trade in terms of value.

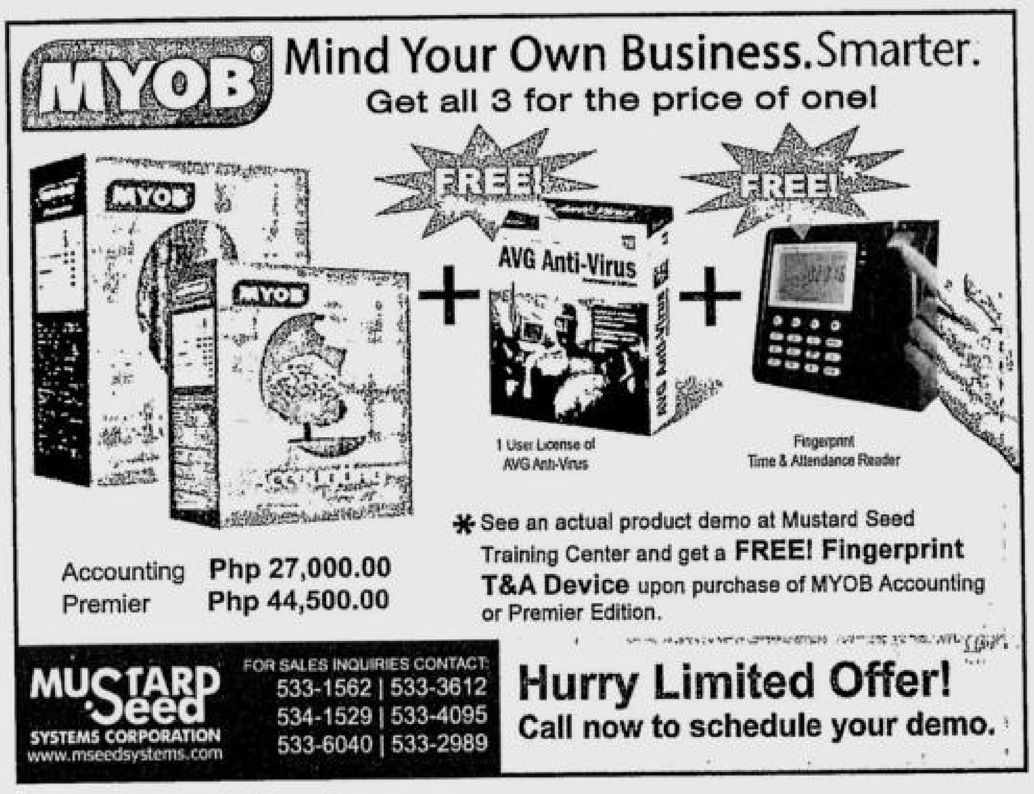
In 2006, the Philippines was the 11th largest destination of Taiwanese exports with 2 percent of total outbound cargoes valued at $224 billion.

The country rank 16th among the largest sources of Taiwan's imports, accounting for about 1.37 percent of total inbound shipments worth $202.69 billion.

Manila and Taipei signed in December 2005 a memorandum of agreement to establish a growth corridor that links the Kaohsiung freeport area in southwestern Taiwan to the Subic and Clark special economic zones in northern Philippines.

Economic officials from both governments are fleshing out the details of how the corridor would be realized, particularly through their yearly joint economic meeting last held in December.

Taiwan's Council of Labor Affairs agreed to allow 90-day visa for Filipino workers who want to undergo training there, providing leeway for Filipinos who normally would have to secure an employment contract of up to two years before they could enter Taiwan.



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GOINGS-ON

Marketing confab set

THE BEST MINDS IN MARKETING AND SALES WILL GATHER ON MARCH 21 to discuss the latest information, trends and insights on the industry at the 3rd Market Master Conference: Brand and Trade Initiatives in Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati City.

Among the conference speakers are: Josiah Go, chair and chief marketing strategist of Mansmith and Fielders Inc., who will discuss the Blue Ocean Strategy; Dondi Gomez, category director-head of marketing training, Unilever Philippines; Weena Pineda of Splash Holdings; Benedicto Cid, managing director of AC Nielsen Philippines; Wilson Lim of Abenson, Waltermart and ElectroWorld, and Joanne Lim of Waltermart Supermarket.

The one-day confab is organized by Mansmith and Fielders Inc. Media partners are the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Business World, with Microdata as AV partner.

ICT-savvy youth

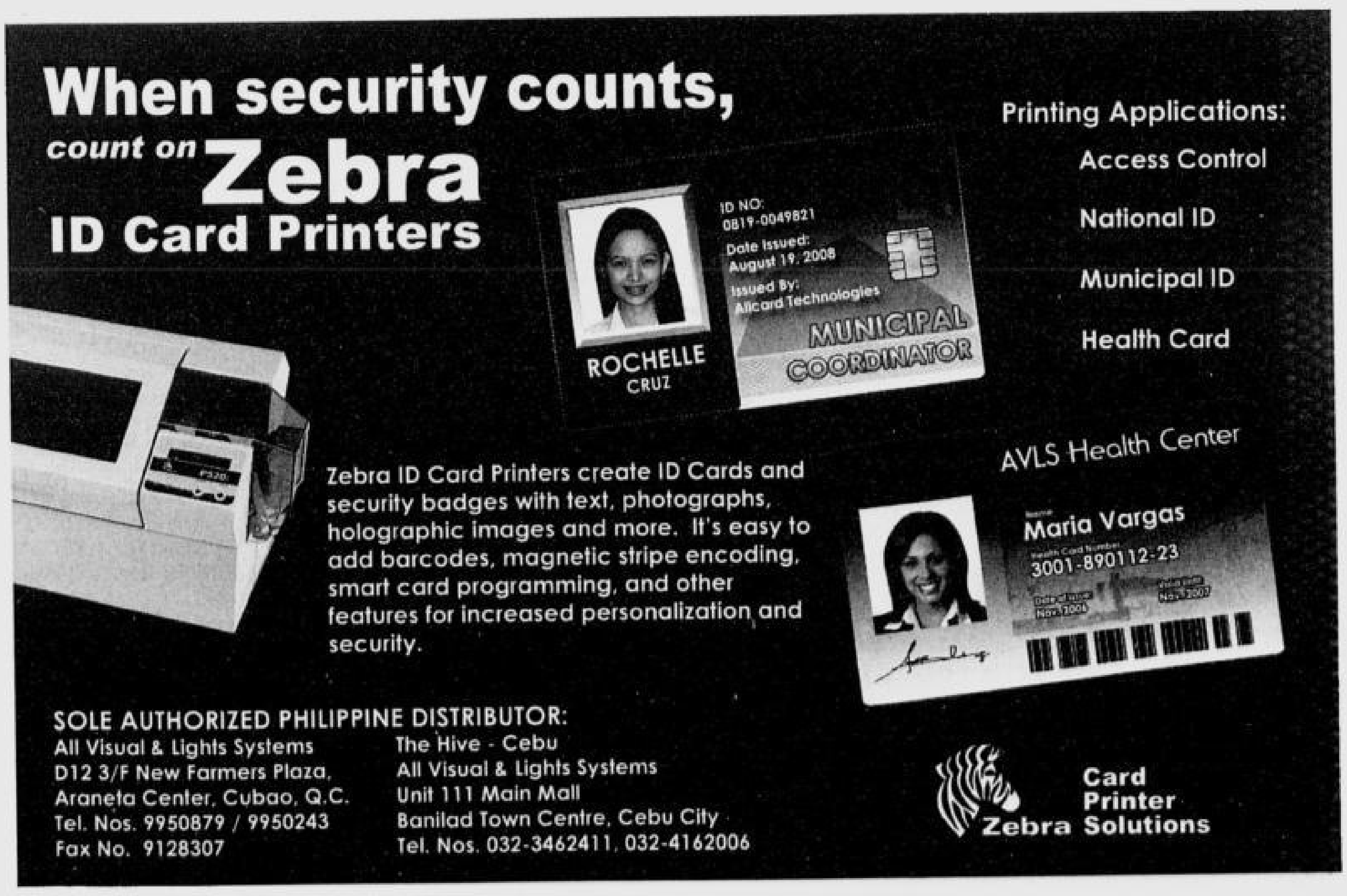
THE UNIVERSITY of the East College of Computer Studies and Systems (UECCSS) celebrated its 19th Foundation Anniversary on Feb. 25-March 2 through the 18th CCSS IT Week with the theme "Empowering Our Youth Through ICT."

This year's week long IT activities featured the launch of Windows Vista, seminars on the "Next Generation Networking Devices," "Net Framework" and "3D Studio Max," and the latest trends in technology with guest speakers from leading ICT firms.

The IT Week also featured different ICT contests like "Brain Bytes," which uses an automated answering system.

Greenplum Asia Pacific

GREENPLUM, maker of the world's leading commercial open-source database for business intelligence and data warehousing, said it had established a regional headquarters in Singapore and hired industry veteran Vinay Samuel as its general manager for Asia Pacific.



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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

BPIFSB runs for the Filipino family

RUNNING IS ONE OF THE BEST things you can do to improve your health -and it's good for your family, too. "Active runners sleep regularly and have more energy, so they can spend more quality time with their families," explains PC/Supt. Samson R. Tucay, CSEE, senior adviser of the Runners Confederation of the Philippines, Inc (RunCPI) and one of the main organizers of the Second National Subic Marathon held recently.

The enthusiastic atmosphere of the marathon was a warm welcome to the families that attended the event, which featured 3km, 5km, 10km, and 21km legs. BPI Family Savings Bank, one of the main sponsors, awarded a Get Started Savings Account worth P5,000 to each of the families that completed the race together as a group.

Perfect for growing families, the Get Started Savings Account comes with a life insurance benefit computed to five times the actual balance, up to P2 million. This means that the more you save, the higher your insurance coverage. The account also comes with an Express Teller ATM card for convenient access anytime through any of the 3,000 Express Teller, Expressnet and Megalink ATMs nationwide.

The fastest family to finish the 3km run together was the Perez family from Olongapo. Their fourteen-year-old daughter, Karizza Joyce, was already a veteran runner of the First National Subic Marathon held in 2005. "We're so proud of her," said Karizza's father, Conrado, with his wife, Melanie.

The Salinas Family, also from Olongapo, was the largest family to cross the 3km finish line hand in hand. "This is our first time to join an event like this, so I'm happy that we won," said Dr. Butch Salinas. He and his wife, Marygen, completed the 3km marathon with their children Khristialee, 10 years old; Isaac Jamer, 6 years old; and Frenziel Bien, 5 years old.

The children of the Tonelada family from Capas, Tarlac, won several awards of their own. Ten-year-old Niña Amor was given the top prize for being the first to cross the 3km finish line, while her sister Nina Angela, six years old, finished the same run at ninth place. The Toneladas' youngest child, Timothy, received a special citation for being the youngest runner at just 4 years old. "We're really a family of athletes. We always run together and we start training our kids almost as soon as they can walk," said Catherine Tonelada. She and her husband, Jimmy, are also veterans of the Palarong Pambansa.

The Santos family from Subic also received a slew of awards. Thirteen-year-old Reynalyn finished the 5km leg at third place, while her eleven-year-old sister Danica finished fourth in the 3km run. Their cousin, Misty Ann, placed fifth in the 3km marathon. "We're three generations of runners," beams the family patriarch, Frank Santos, a World Marthon veteran.

Aside from handing out Get Started savings accounts as special prizes, BPI Family Savings Bank also handed out gift baskets to all of the families that participated in the event.

BPI Family Savings Bank actively supports events like the National Subic Marathon because it strongly believes in keeping families together. This is why BPI Family Savings Bank offers a wide range of financial tools to help Filipino families grow together and get the most out of life.

Superbrands recognition for Eng Bee Tin

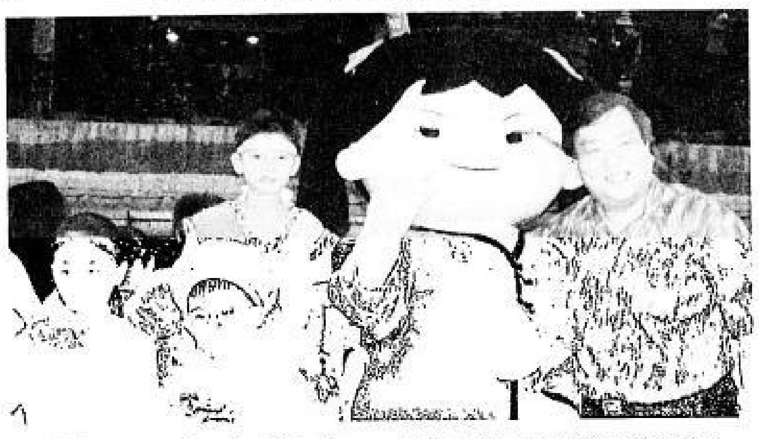
GERRY CHUA, OWNER OF ENG BEE Tin, has all the reasons to be merry this Chinese New Year. Aside form being one of the major sponsors in the weeklong celebration of the Chinese New Year, Eng Bee Tin recently garnered a distinct recognition from Superbrands Philippines which has been known as a credible and knowledgeable resource for standard of excellence and quality in products and services.

"We are very grateful for the recognition. Our hard work paid off. For years, we are giving the best and healthiest food option for our customers. Now, we have to work extra hard to maintain this status," shares Gerry Chua.

For almost 90 years in the food industry, Eng Bee Tin is considered to be the home of the best hopia and tikoy in the country. Ask anyone where you can get a sumptuous grab of hopia and other Chinese delicacies; they will surely lead you to Binondo. Eng Bee Tin has set a landmark in China town and has captured the taste not only of Chinese, but Filipinos, as well.

Eng Bee Tin boasts of its latest addition to its prime line of hopia products-the Hopia Mongo Lite, Tikoy Lite and Ube Tikoy Lite.

Superbrands is an independent arbiter of branding. The Superbrands organization was originally set up in London nearly a decade ago, where it published the first Superbrands book. Since then, it has expanded its operations to 25 countries worldwide. At present, Superbrands Philippines has launched four volumes of the book. This book will be another testimony to the Asian region and to the world of the Filipino's standard of excellence and quality in its products and services.



MAJOR sponsor Eng Bee Tin's Gerry Chua hams it up with some of the adorable contestants of Little Ms. & Mr. China, as part of the weeklong celebration of the Chinese New Year in Chinatown, Binondo. Eng Bee Tin sumptuous hopia, tikoy and other delicacies are locally available in various supermarkets, groceries, and restaurants nationwide. The company also exports products to customers in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the United States.

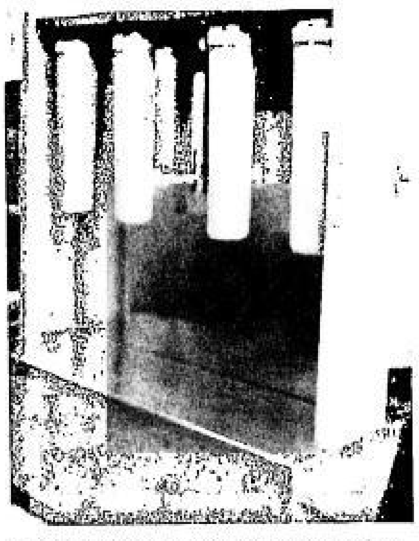
Compact water station, chlorine-free pools

THE UHP-500 MINERAL WATER REfilling station is manufactured and sold by Electromex Inc for only P150,000. This high-capacity (3,000 gallons per day), high-purity, non-acidic, alkaline base refilling station uses straight triple oxygen or Ozone. It kills germs and bacteria 300 times better than chlorine. The unit is complete with pumps, stainless tanks, ultraviolet germicidal lamp, carbon, multi-stage sedimentation filters and the industrial strength Ozonation system.

The UHP-500 costs only 30 centavos per gallon to operate, and doesn't generate any backwash nor wastewater unlike the reverse osmosis type. The UHP-500's size is 4 feet x3 feet x 6 feet and comes fully assembled, and never needs sodium chemicals or requires franchise fees.

The system is perfect for business or private consumption: camps, churches, cooperatives, factories, schools, hospitals, condos, resorts, and hotels. It is ideal for groups or individuals who wish to save on money by producing their own safe drinking water.

The UHP-500 can also be used to treat water for overhead tanks and swimming pools. You'll never need chlorine and dangerous muriatic acid, and you'll enjoy chemical-free, environment-friendly water safe for you and your family. For more information, log on to www.electromex-inc.com, or call 531-6782 or 535-9069.



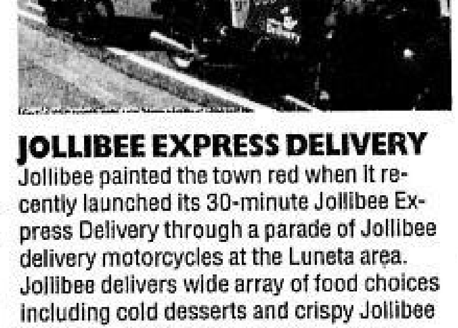
ELECTROMEX's UHP-500 water station

WHARTON-PENN CLUB OF THE PHILIPPINES ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

Current board members of the Wharton-Penn Club of the Philippines Antonio Herbosa (right), Loy Saguil, Jun Jun Villanueva, Richard Tantoco, Felicia Atienza and Lauro Baja recently welcomed the newly elected Club officers and directors for 2007. Feliza Peralta, Kenneth Uy, Rommel Panganiban (second from right), and Vince Concio were elected as new members of the Wharton-Penn Club Board. For 2007, Herbosa, who is a principal for corporate finance at accounting firm Punongbayan & Araullo, will serve as club president, while Kenneth Uy will serve as corporate secretary. The Wharton Club has lined up a range of activities for the business community. Down the line, the Wharton Club will also host special interest talks and fellowships with key business leaders. For more information about the club and its upcoming activities, visit its website at www.wharton-penn.com, or contact Len Buning at (632)817-9961, fax number (632)817-9962, or e-mail whartonpennclub@yahoo.com.

REVIEW OF MFI-CENTRO ELIS ACCORD

Officials of MFI Foundation (formerly Meralco Foundation) and the Associazione Centro ELIS met recently to assess the achievements of their joint project: to improve the education and employment opportunities for the Filipino youth and the training of teachers with support from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Shown in photo (seated from left): Lolita T. Morales, VP for finance, MFI; Alessio Fumagalli, representative, Entro ELIS; Col. Alex T. Escaño, MFI president; Dr. Buddy Magturo, Philippine representative, Centro ELIS; and Manolo S, Santos, head, MFI Technological Institute.



JOLLIBEE EXPRESS DELIVERY

Jollibee painted the town red when it recently launched its 30-minute Jollibee Express Delivery through a parade of Jollibee delivery motorcycles at the Luneta area. Jollibee delivers wide array of food choices including cold desserts and crispy Jollibee fries. For delivery, dial 8-7000 and order your favorite langhap-sarap snack or meal.

CITIBANK SAVINGS OPENS BINONDO BRANCH

Citibank Savings recently opened a new branch in Binondo located at 485 Quintin Paredes Street. The branch opening brings world-class banking and best-in-class products and services closer to the growing Filipino-Chinese market. The opening coincided with another milestone as Citibank Savings is now a proud partner of Tulong Barya Para Sa Eskwela, a campaign spearheaded by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and the Department of Education (DepEd) that aims to raise funds for public elementary schools, by inviting people to donate their coins. The BSP campaign also aims to raise awareness and encourage the public to accept and use coins regularly to keep them in circulation. Gracing the Binondo branch opening were (from left): Chinatown Rep. Miles Roces, Citibank N.A. Country Business Manager and Citibank Savings chairman Mark Jones, BSP corporate affairs director Fe de la Cruz, Citibank Savings Binondo branch manager Lesley Co and Citibank Savings president Jeffrey Choa.

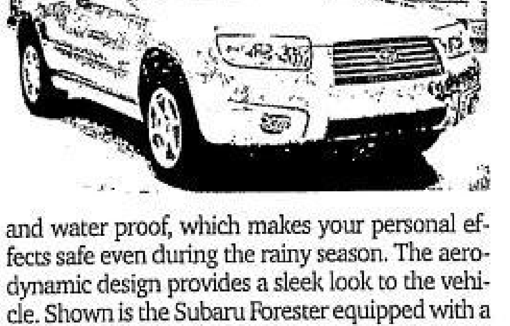
GMA NETWORK BAGS TWO ANVIL AWARDS

GMA Network Inc bagged two Awards of Merit (2005 GMA Annual Report and GMA Fantastic 56 Integrated Anniversary Communication Plan) in the recently held Anvil Awards-the most coveted and most exalted award for public relations practice in the Philippines. Proudly accepting the Anvil Award of Merit for its 2005 Fantastic 56 Integrated Anniversary Communication Plan, GMA's associate creative director Armie Herrera (center) and (to her right) VP for human resources Dexter Mendoza gamely poses with 42nd Anvil Awards chair Butch S. Raquel APR, Myla Villanueva and Leonides Valencia, members of the board of jurors.

CONSULAR CORPS MONTHLY MEETING

The Consular Corps of the Philippines held its 1st monthly meeting at the Captains Bar of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati Avenue, Makati City Jan. 31. Shown are (from left) Richard D. Haynes, Dean, Consular Corps of the Philippines, Consul General, Embassy of the United States of America, Evie Costa, Consul a.h. Consulate of the Republic of Togo, Cecile Costa Grosson, Consular Officer, Consulate of the Republic of Togo, guest speaker, Her Excellency Kristie A. Kenney, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of the United States of America, Anna Marie Ablan, Consul a.h Republic of Belarus, and Angeles 'Toto' R. Santocildes.

Load up with Thule



WHAT BETTER WAY IS THERE TO COMPLEment the rugged and aggressive looking Subaru Forester than a Thule load system carrier? Designed to make traveling more convenient and pleasurable for your family, Thule's line of roof racks and load carriers are geared towards active individuals and families who like to explore the great outdoors. Thule provides you with the solution to maximize the load capacity of your car, AUV or SUV. Unlike locally manufactured load carriers, Thule has an easy snap on, snap off feature which lets you install the load carriers with ease.

Thule load systems is guaranteed safe from rust, no drilling required and is wind tunnel tested to aerodynamically complement the exterior design of any vehicle. Thule's line of load carriers are 100-percent machine made from Sweden and has passed the four seasons test of the ISO. Thule is the only accredited OEM designer in the local market and is a proud supplier of load carriers for brands such as Ford, Volvo, Land Rover, Nissan, Toyota, GM, BMW, Subaru and Mercedes Benz.

All Thule roof racks and boxes are theft proof and water proof, which makes your personal effects safe even during the rainy season. The aerodynamic design provides a sleek look to the vehicle. Shown is the Subaru Forester equipped with a Thule roof-mounted rack system. For more information on how to gear up and make your vacation a more adventurous one, load up and visit the Subaru-Thule display at the Motor Image Showroom along Edsa or at the Thule-EGR Showrooms in Ortigas Avenue (744-6367) and Pasong Tamo (892-7847), or log on to www.thule.com.

RITM 6th postgraduate course March 15

THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR TROPICAL Medicine Medical Department will be holding its 6th Postgraduate Course in Infectious and Tropical Diseases titled "Highlights, Headlines and Horizons" on March 15 and 16 at the RITM Auditorium, Filinvest, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. List of distinguished speakers is headed by Dr. Daniel Libraty, dengue expert from the University of Massachusetts Medical Center and Dr. Jennifer Gaudioso, biosecurity expert from the Center of Disease Control, Atlanta. Other topics to be discussed are meningococcemia, pandemic, seasonal and bird flu, travel medicine, updates on vaccines and rabies management, herbal medicine and its application to infectious diseases and laboratory sessions and demonstration. This course is open to all doctors, nurses, midwives and med techs. For more information, call Medical Department at 807-9603 or 0915-3165666.

Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City

BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITION

In Compliance with RA 7041

Accounting Division

1. **Chief Accountant SG 24**
   Item No. OMBA-CACT-1-1998
   Education: Masteral Degree; **Experience:** 4 years in position/s involving management and supervision; **Training:** 24 hours of training in management and supervision; **Eligibility:** RA 1080
2. **Accountant II SG 15**
   Item No. OMBA-A2-1-1998
   Education: Bachelor's Degree in Commerce/Business Administration major in Accounting; **Experience:** 1 year of relevant experience; **Training:** 4 hours of relevant training; **Eligibility:** RA 1080

Applicants should submit within ten (10) calendar days from the date of this publication to the Human Resource Management Division at the above address, the following requirements:

1) A letter stating the position applied for;
2) Duly accomplished Personal Data Sheet (CSC) Form 212;
3) 1" x 1" picture (colored);
4) * Bar/Board Rating or CSC Certificate of Eligibility;
5) * Transcript of Records;
6) * Certificate of Seminars/Training attended;
7) * Service Records or Certificates from previous/present employers stating the positions assumed and corresponding actual duties and responsibilities (if applicable);
8) * Performance Appraisal Reports for the last two rating periods (for current government employees only);
9) Statement duly signed by the applicant as to any relative(s) within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, currently employed with the Office of the Ombudsman.

* Where photocopies are filed, the documents must be certified as true copies by the proper authorities or the applicant may present the originals to the Human Resource Management Officer for comparison with the photocopies.

(PDI – Mar. 5, 2007)

CREW REQUIREMENTS UNTIL JUNE 2007 TO MAN ANOTHER 70 VESSELS

Our Principal *Marlow Navigation* is urgently needing the following positions for our modern Container vessels and bulk carriers:

Master	from US$5,115. –	6 mos. Contract
Chief Mate	from US$3,795. –	8 mos. Contract
2nd Mate	from US$2,640. –	10 mos. Contract
3rd Mate	from US$1,584. – to US$1,824. –	10 mos. Contract
Chief Engr	from US$4,950. –	6 mos. Contract
2nd Engr	from US$3,795. –	8 mos. Contract
3rd Engr	from US$2,640. –	10 mos. Contract
Electrician	from US$3,019. –	10 mos. Contract
C/Cook	from US$1,378. – to US$1,486. –	10 mos. Contract
Ck/B (AB/Ck)	from US$1,067. –	10 mos. Contract
Bosun/Fitter	from US$1,105. – to US$1,213. –	10 mos. Contract
K/AB	from US$1,004. –	10 mos. Contract
AB/Oiler	from US$903. –	10 mos. Contract
OS/Wiper	from US$680. –	10 mos. Contract

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Galant Maritime Services, Inc.
1101 Ermita Center Building
1350 Roxas Boulevard,
Ermita, Manila
PIC: C/M Norman Miranda
PIC: C/M Chito Mendoza
e-mail: recruitment_galant@marlow.com.ph
Tel. # 525-6092; 526-6888 loc 115
POEA Lic. 108-SB-091603-R

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

INVITATION TO BID

The Government of the Philippines (GOP) through the Bids and Awards Committee for the Old Iloilo Airport (BAC-Old Iloilo Airport) invites interested proponents to participate in a public bidding for the approximately 54 hectares Old Iloilo Airport lot located in Mandurriao, Iloilo City.

Interested proponents may, at no cost, obtain the Terms of Reference for the Sale of the 54 Hectares Old Iloilo Airport, Mandurriao, Iloilo City (TOR) from the BAC-Old Iloilo Airport at the addresses indicated below beginning on 01 March 2007. After reviewing the TOR, proponents interested to participate in the bid must submit a Letter of Interest and purchase the bid package from the BAC-Iloilo Airport at a non-refundable fee of P 25,000.00 payable by check to the Department of Finance. The bid package includes forms of all documents required to participate in the bid, as well as detailed information about the Old Iloilo Airport.

BAC-Old Iloilo Airport-Manila
Department of Finance
5/F, DOF Bldg., BSP Complex
Roxas Blvd., Manila
Tel: (02) 524 1633
Fax: (02) 523 5143
Contact: James Chin

Iloilo City Hall
Plaza Libertad St., Iloilo City
Tel: (033) 337 5026
e-mail: banoymir@yahoo.com
Contact: Atty. Giovanni Alfonso Miraflores

Pre-bid conferences open to all interested parties will be held on the following dates and locations:

Date	Time	Location
13 March 2007 (Tuesday)	2:00 p.m.	City Budget Office Conference Room COA Building Plaza Libertad Street Iloilo City
15 March 2007 (Thursday)	2:00 p.m.	5/F DOF Building Department of Finance BSP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, cor. Pablo Ocampo Manila

The indicative timetable for the bid is as follows:

01-Mar-07	TOR and bid package available to all interested parties
13-Mar-07	Pre-bid conference – Iloilo
15-Mar-07	Pre-bid conference – Manila
27-Mar-07	Deadline for buying bid package
27-Mar-07	Deadline for submission of pre-qualification requirements and comments to transaction documents
03-Apr-07	Notification of eligibility to eligible bidders
10-Apr-07	Release of final transaction documents
24-Apr-07	Bid date
09-May-07	Target for issuance of Notice of Award
24-May-07	Target closing date

Any questions may be addressed to the BAC-Old Iloilo Airport - Manila at the address and/or telephone number indicated above.

(Sgd.) **John P. Sevilla**
BAC Chairman

(PDI--March 1, 2 & 5, 2007)

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Be it known that a Warrant of Arrest of
BERNIE FILARCA SACRO
whose picture appears above with last known address at # 30 Tangali St., Brgy. Nagsangalan, Vigan Ilocos Sur, was issued by the Regional Trial Court of Quezon City, Branch 91, in **Criminal Case No. Q-06-139314 for the Crime of THEFT.**

A reward shall be given to anyone who can give any information leading to his arrest.
Please direct any information to:

G.C. JACOB LAW OFFICE
Tel. No. 410-0029 or 912-8881 to 99

All information shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.

(PDI – March 5, 2007)

Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc.
(ZAMCELCO)
Pulik, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Pulik, this city, per requisite of Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL interested Bidders/ Suppliers to apply for pre-qualification/eligibility and to bid for the supply of **STEEL POLE, ON CONSIGNMENT BASIS** and VAT inclusive of the following items, to wit:

200 pcs. OCTAGONAL STEEL POLE HOT DIP GALVANIZED

Type : ONE SEGMENT
Class : 35 FOOTER
AGENCY PRICE : 13,275.19 / pcs

Specifications:

Length	35 footer
Top Diameter	5 inches
Butt Diameter	9 to 10 inches
Wall Thickness	3 mm
Design/Horizontal Load	500 Kgs
Weight	150 to 160 Kgs

Note : Supplier should provide Designs drawing and Load Analysis Computation Supplier should be a Certified/Accredited by the International Organization for standardization (ISO) 9001:2000

You may secure the Pre-qualification Requirements from the Office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Pulik, this city anytime during office hours before the date of the bidding.

Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements, shall not be later than 5:00 p.m. of March 6, 2007 and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification / eligibility process. Only those who will be qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding. Those who were previously qualified to participate in this bidding are exempted from the pre-qualification requirements, hence, may participate in this bidding straightforwardly.

Bidding will be conducted at 2:00 p.m. on March 13, 2007.

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of March 13, 2007. Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) REINERIO R. RAMOS
General Manager

(PDI – March 3 & 5, 2007)

CALBAYOG CITY WATER DISTRICT
J.D. Avelino St., Calbayog City
Western Samar

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Calbayog City Water District through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/dealers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Second-Hand/Slightly Used service vehicle described hereunder:

Name of Contract	Location	Brief Remarks
One (1) UNIT DOUBLE CAB PICK-UP, 2.4-3.0 liter fuel injection Turbocharged diesel engine, four wheel Drive (4x4) 5 speed manual Transmission, Air condition, Power steering, 205-235/65-70 R 15 Tire size with aluminum rim, FM/AM-CD Player, complete with standard toos, spare tire and duplicate key	Province of Samar City of Calbayog	For use in the Calbayog City Water District activities requiring transport

Conditions:

1. The mileage of the offered unit from the time it was originally acquried as a brand new unit must not exceed 60,000 kms.
2. The unit to be offered must have a remaining useful life of Four (4) years. This must be certified by the bidder and to be included during the submission of bids. Note: Remaining useful life refer to the difference between the estimated service life of the subject vehicle and number of years of actual service of the same.
3. Total Bid price should not exceed P70,000 inclusive of taxes.
4. Mode of payment: 50% down, balance payable in 4 monthly equal payments at 0% interest.

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount equivalent of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. All particulars relative hereto shall be governed by the pertinent provision of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

Interested bidders may obtain further information from CCWD/BAC Section at the address stated above from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, Tel. Nos. (055)-2091183, 209-1843.

The CCWD-BAC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference on March 30, 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the CCWD Conference Room, CCWD Administration Building, J.D. Avelino St., Calbayog City, Western Samar.

Bid opening shall be on April 12, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. at the above stated address.

The CCWD-BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **EDITHA C. YRIGAN**
BAC Chairman

Noted:
(Sgd.) **ARNULFO W. BANZON**
General Manager

(PDI–March 5, 2007)

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Jazz pianist Noriega enthralled audience

NORIEGA

Noted US-based Filipino jazz pianist **Victor Noriega** enthralled audience in a special concert titled **ALAY** at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Little Theater yesterday.

Hailed as a young Dave Brubeck, a great jazz pianist, Noriega, son of Filipino immigrants, has been honored with prestigious Golden Ear Awards given by **Earshot Jazz** as **Emerging Artist of the Year** (2005), **Northwest Instrumentalist of the Year** (2006) and **Northwest Recording of the Year** (2006) for his **ALAY** album.

Noriega obtained his Bachelor of Music in Jazz Studies in 2000 from the University of Washington on a four-year scholarship.

Noriega performed original compositions and contemporary arrangements of Filipino tunes such as *Dahil Sa Iyo, Kuya, Bahay-Kubo, Pandangguhan, Maalaala Mo Kaya, Saan ka man Naroroon, Bayan Ko, Harana.* Featured guest artists were Alvin Cornista (saxophone), Roger Herrera (bass) and Jay Cummings (drums). Noriega is currently performing at the Philippine International Jazz and Arts Festival 2007.

ALAY was recorded through a full residency grant by the 2005 Artist Support Program of the Jack Straw Foundation, produced by T&D (Time and Direction) Records in 2006. It was a benefit concert for outstanding music students at the University of the Philippines (*through the Scholarship Program of the Sigma Alpha Sorority Alumnae Association*) and the University of Santo Tomas.

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION OF YELLOW CAB BICUTAN FOOD CORPORATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Articles of Incorporation of YELLOW CAB BICUTAN FOOD CORPORATION has been duly amended by shortening the corporate term thereof and thereby dissolving the said corporation as of February 15, 2007.

(Sgd.) **VICTORIA M. VIZCONDE**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI–March 5, 12 & 19, 2007)

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OBITUARIES

Message of Thanks

We, the children, grandchildren
and great-grandchildren of the late

MARY JAVIER RANADA

of Laoag City and Pasig City

hereby convey our appreciation
and gratitude to all who spent precious time
with us at the wake, attended the funeral,
sent flowers and spiritual bouquets, and
comforted us with your love, sympathy
and support during our time of sorrow.
We fervently pray the Lord to grant
each one of you, your most
cherished prayer.

Introibo ad altarem Dei
Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam

LUZ ALZONA ZAFRA

July 12, 1901 – March 3, 2007

After more than a century of love and service to the Lord, **Nanay Zafra** passed on to eternal life, to finally be reunited with her husband, **Nicolas**, and daughter, **Sister Lourdes, SSpS**.

She lies in state at the Church of Sta. Maria della Strada, Katipunan Ave. corner Pansol Rd., Quezon City.

Masses will be celebrated every evening at 8:00 until Monday, March 5, 2007. Interment will be on Tuesday, March 6, 2007, at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the church.

Her daughter, **Fely**, and her husband, **Bert Reyes**, invite all her friends, relatives and former associates and students to remember and to pray for her, to celebrate her life, and to give thanks to the Lord for a life well lived.

In place of flowers, donations to Nanay's charities will be appreciated.

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be firm, steadfast, and always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."
1 Corinthians 15:58

On his 25th Death Anniversary
we lovingly remember

Justice Carmelino G. Alvendia

(November 3, 1906 – March 6, 1982)

He was a devoted husband, loving father, honest and courageous public servant, civic-minded Filipino, dedicated teacher, diligent scholar, just person, compassionate friend, a loyal child of God.

WE MISS YOU. But the memory of your goodness lives forever in the hearts of your children and grandchildren, in the hearts of all those whose lives you touched when you were still here on earth, as well as in the hearts of those you continue to reach out to from the Great Beyond.

Holy Mass will be offered tomorrow, March 6, 2007, at various places. The kind reader is invited to attend any of these Masses and to say a prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

Plaza of Peace, Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque	8:00 A.M.
Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila	7:15 A.M.
Nuestra Señora de Guia, Ermita, Manila	8:00 A.M.
Mary the Queen, San Juan, Metro Manila	7:00 A.M.
Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City	7:30 A.M.
St. Andrew The Apostle, Bel-Air, Makati City	6:30 A.M.
St. Vincent's Parish, Baguio City	6:00 A.M.
St. Joseph's Parish, Floridablanca, Pampanga	6:30 A.M.

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

GlobeSolutions partners with Saklolo.net

GLOBESOLUTIONS, THE CORPORATE wireless group of Globe Telecom and Innove Communications, has partnered with Saklolo.net to deliver mobile solutions that will benefit today's enterprises.

Saklolo.net, a company that specializes in commerce solutions, and GlobeSolutions put together BizTXT and TxtConnect to enable corporations to create new SMS-based services for their customers, partners and employees.

TxtConnect by GlobeSolutions enables fast, efficient and affordable communications as it allows companies to send high-volume text broadcasts to pre-registered recipients such as their employees, dealers or customers. Messages can be tailor fit to a group and sent via SMS in bulk of up to thousands of people at a time. Recipients can also immediately reply by text.

BizTXT by Saklolo.net is an SMS gateway for applications designed to simplify connecting a company's line-of-business applications to the SMS network. It allows corporate application systems such as e-mail, inventory, supply chain, etc to be SMS-enabled. With BizTXT an enterprise can share, manage and customize its inbound and outbound text messages to suit its business requirements.

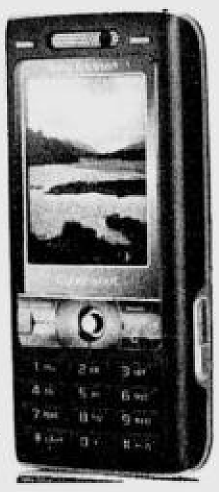
Having TxtConnect and BizTXT installed in its corporate network empowers a company to extend any of its existing business processes to remote SMS users.

saklolo.net
We're here to help.
Solution

SEALING the new partnership are (from left) director for business development of Saklolo.net Lawrence T. del Mundo, managing director of Saklolo.net Michael Jabillo, enterprise business group head Jesus C. Romero and GlobeSolutions product manager Gina Ocampo-Leonor.

Sony Ericsson K800 Cyber-shot 2007's best 3GSM mobile handset

SONY ERICSSON RECENTLY ANNOUNCED that its K800 Cyber-shot camera phone has been awarded Best 3GSM Handset at the GSM Association's Global Mobile Awards 2007.



Launched last year, the K800 is the first Sony Ericsson Cyber-shot camera phone, a brand that created a new lifestyle of mobile communication by combining a performance 3.2-megapixel camera for quality image capture and a 3G mobile handset for fast and easy transfer and sharing of those images.

Anders Runevad, corporate executive vice president and head of sales, Sony Ericsson, said, "Our Cyber-shot portfolio has made true mobile imaging a reality for millions of people and we are very proud that the industry has endorsed our achievements with such a prestigious accolade."

Since Cyber-shot camera phones were introduced in 2006, more than 4.5 million handsets have been sold worldwide. The K800 was also put to use by the world's greatest secret agent in last year's James Bond movie, "Casino Royale". The Cyber-shot camera phone range has now been extended to include the K810, K818, K550 and the K550im-the first Cyber-shot phone to support i-mode.

Get more, pay less with Big Shot Value Meals

NOW, YOU CAN ENJOY GREAT-TASTING PIZza Hut meal for only P198 or just P99 per person with Pizza Hut's new Big Shot Value Meals for Two.

Giving value for your money, the Big Shot Meals for Two lets you and your buddy enjoy Pizza Hut's classy casual-dining feel and its fast and friendly service at a very affordable price, with each meal combination offering a delightful serving of Buddy Pan Pizza-in Hawaiian, Bacon & Cheese, or Pepperoni flavor-plus two glasses of Pepsi and another mouthwatering Pizza Hut product.

"Pizza lovers won't have to dig deep in their pockets anymore because for just P198 for two, that's less than P100 per person, they can now enjoy not only a delicious Pizza Hut meal but also a totally-satisfying Pizza Hut dining experience," said Pizza Hut VP for marketing Elaine Guzman.

If you want more pizzas, go for Meal 1, which features two servings of Buddy Pan Pizza, garlic bread and two glasses of Pepsi. But if you prefer rice together with a Buddy Pan Pizza and two glasses of Pepsi, take Meal 2, which comes with BBQ ribs with rice, or Meal 4 with one-piece Roast Chicken with rice. If you're in the mood for pasta along with Buddy Pan Pizza and two glasses of Pepsi, have it with Meal 3's Spaghetti Bolognese and garlic bread. And if you like some veggies to go with Buddy Pan Pizza and two glasses of Pepsi, indulge in Meal 5's Caesar Salad and two servings of Mushroom Soup.

So no need to skip your favorite Pizza Hut meal just because you're on a tight budget! With the new Big Shot Value Meals for Two, you can truly expect more and pay less. The Big Shot Value Meals for Two is available for dine-in only.

Olympus roadshow begins at SM Megamall

OLYMPUS, ONE OF THE MOST WIDELY RECognized producers of high-quality and stylish cameras, once again held its yearly roadshows to different SM Malls within the Metro.

This two-week exhibition just started recently at SM Megamall, Upper Ground Floor, Building B. The roadshow showcased Olympus' most wanted cams such as the FE-170- 6 megapixels, FE-190-6 megapixels, SP-510 UZ-7.1 megapixels, E-330- 8 megapixels and E-500-8 megapixels.

Aside from these, mall shoppers will definitely be amazed of the newest and cool Olympus cams as it features the new Mju series line up. Mju 725- 7.1 megapixels, Mju 1000- 10 megapixels, Mju 730- 7.1 megapixels and Mju 750- 7.1 megapixels.

The Olympus SM Megamall roadshow is until March 7. Next stop will be at SM North Edsa-CC-UGF Centermall from March 22 to April 4.

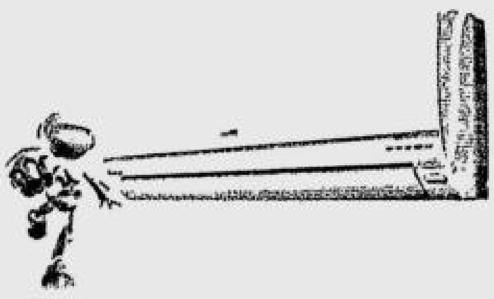
TOBY'S SPORTS JUNIOR VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

Colegio San Agustin (girls division) and Concepcion Elementary School (boys division) were the champions of the recently concluded Toby's Sports Junior Volleyball League. Together with the Champion teams are Bobby Claudio (right) and League Organizer Freddie Infante with Toby Claudio (left)

Panasonic takes battle for cleaner air, low energy use indoors

WHO SAYS LIVING AND BREATHING clean air inside our homes comes at the price of an arm and a leg? Certainly not the enterprising people at Panasonic—recently, they showed that clean indoor air could be enjoyed in every home without the prohibitive cost brought about by high-energy consumption.

On Feb. 9, in front of more than 200 dealers and guests at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Panasonic launched its full air conditioning line. Amidst the revelry and pageantry, the true stars of the night-the dealers-got a first-hand look at the entire line, bannered by the SAC (Split-Type AC) and the WAC (Window-Type AC).



THE ENVIO Robot and the split-type air-conditioner with Inverter Technology

During the launch, Panasonic unveiled the new Envio Robot. Envio-Environmental Innovation-is the latest weapon of Panasonic to fight the new war for cleaner indoor air. Its battle plan revolves around the simple strategy of eliminating dust and other airborne allergens while substantially reducing high-energy usage. According to Rene Almeda, Panasonic Philippines (PPH) president, "Both the SAC and WAC units come equipped with the right weapons and tactics to do their jobs with the utmost efficiency."

Another ace up SAC's sleeve is the Inverter Technology. This system regulates the voltage to save up to 50-percent energy and reduce electricity bills. "The system evaluates the air temperature of a room and provides just the needed amount of power to cool it," Almeda states. "It's 1.5 times faster than conventional air conditioners." During operation, the Inverter Technology automatically adjusts the power to maintain constant comfort.

SAC units also bring its high-tech weaponry to the fore in the fight against air-borne pollutants. They come equipped with the E-Ion Air Purifying System with Patrol Sensor. This system cleans the air in four simple steps: 1. The Patrol Sensor monitors the air quality. Like a radar system, it scans the air and once it detects dust particles, it activates the air purifying function; 2. Then the E-Ion Generator sends the shock troops: 3 trillion e-ions to stick onto the dust particles; 3. Once negatively charged, the dust particles are quickly deactivated; 4. The positively charged E-Ion Filter then easily traps the deactivated dust particles.

For the WAC line, its primary weapon is the Super Alleru Buster Filter. This innovative filter forms a virtually impregnable first line of defense against harmful bacteria, allergens and microbes invading the air space of our homes. First, it attracts the allergens then traps them, thereby liberating your room from their harmful effects. The Super Alleru Buster Filter is so effective it has an unbelievably high capture rate of 99 percent, inactivating all allergens, viruses and microbes caught in its grasp.

"The WAC units also function with a high EER, meaning it gives off superior cooling at low energy usage, giving you more savings," states Almeda. "In fact, research stats show that its EER is way higher than government regulations." Just like an efficient, well-trained commando, the WAC does its job silently, with noise levels as low as 39 decibels.

"With our full line-up of air conditioners built to eliminate indoor air pollution and high-energy consumption, Panasonic, once again, is taking the lead in providing more innovative and practical life solutions for every Filipino."

MITSUBISHI CORP DONATES TO PDCC OF MARINDUQUE

Since 1991, Mitsubishi Corp (MC) has implemented various regional aid programs overseas in the fields of environment, health, education, international exchange, culture and arts and disaster recovery as part of its social contribution activities. Most recently, MC, through its Manila Branch in the Philippines, donated vehicles to the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council (PDCC) of Marinduque to assist the province in its recovery efforts after it was severely devastated by Typhoon 'Reming'. The donation, consisting of an Isuzu D-Max pick up truck and an Isuzu Crosswind AUV, will be used for the distribution of relief, the provision of critical assistance and the coordination of livelihood programs across the province. These new units will help enhance the PDCC's logistics and will aid in implementing more effective contingency planning and disaster management programs for potential emergencies in Marinduque. Present during the ceremonial turnover, from left, were

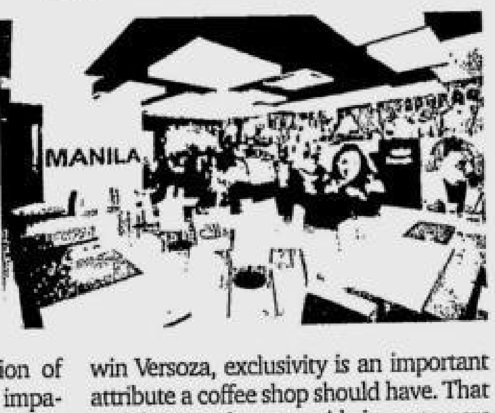
MOA SIGNING &
TURN OVER CEREMONY

Isuzu Philippines Corp president Yoshifumi Komura; Mitsubishi Corp (Manila branch) general manager Toshifumi Inami; and Marinduque governor Carmencita Reyes.

Have a sip of Italy at Segafredo

SURELY YOU'VE FOUND YOURSELF instinctively steering away from a crowd more than a few times, especially when you're on a nice little break. Maybe it's the noise. Maybe it's what they're lining up for, or the combination of both that's giving some places that conveyor belt-fed assembly line ambience. Well these days, it isn't wrong to look for something special even just for a nice little break. So how about a little piece of Italy to go with that cup of coffee and muffin of yours?

Almost exactly at the corner of Wilson Street and Ortigas Avenue in Greenhills is a newly opened coffee shop with a name that's so unabashedly Italian, you might find yourself unconsciously parroting the accent. Segafredo Zanetti. Yes, it's a mouthful, but it does roll out of the tongue easily. And you'd be right to assume that a coffee shop that's stamped with something as personal as one's full name would serve you food and beverage preparations that would be worth staking one's reputation on, for several generations, in fact.



You can be sure that Segafredo Zanetti does coffee right. Once there, you have to try the most Italian of coffees... the Espresso. Looking for a faster way to get his morning brew, a certain Luigi Bezzera from Milan tried forcing very hot water under high pressure through ground coffee in 1903. The resulting process produced quite a unique type of coffee with a thicker consistency, and an unmistakable concentration of flavor. We can all thank Luigi's impatience for the Espresso we now enjoy. But at Segafredo, Espresso is certainly not the only thing you'd enjoy.

Rarely does the color red look cool to the eyes, but in the case of Segafredo's refreshingly modern yet surprisingly cozy ambience, it does, and in combination with the natural and tungsten-hued lighting, is actually soothing. The fact that it's not situated deep in a frenetic shopping mall or a bustling business center adds to its more exclusive appeal. And according to general manager Erwin Versoza, exclusivity is an important attribute a coffee shop should have. That and the capacity to provide its customers with a premium experience every time they visit, so he spared no expense both in time and resources in designing and building his branch of Segafredo Zanetti.

To enjoy an authentic Italian coffee moment, a fulfilling dining experience, or better yet both-visit Segafredo Zanetti Greenhills at the IEB Building, Ortigas Avenue corner Wilson Street, San Juan, Metro Manila. Call 726-7782 and 726-4733 for more information. Buon Giorno!

Creating happy memories with Jollibee Kids' Party

MOMENTOUS OCCASIONS SUCH AS birthdays, graduation, and other celebrations are among children's most cherished memories. Make them even more memorable by spending them at their favorite place - Jollibee, where families and friends always share the happiest times. Jollibee Kids' Party offer various exciting themes, a langhap-sarap menu selection, superior party amenities, and friendly rates to make any childhood celebration an exciting and enjoyable experience for kids and parents alike. Just choose a party package and let Jollibee handle the rest.

Each Jollibee Kids' Party can be customized to suit children's preferences. Jollibee's newest party theme - Justice League keeps the choices current for the coolest of kids. This latest theme guarantees a truly "super" time with heroes Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, The Martian Manhunter, The Flash, Green Lantern, and Hawkgirl. Just like any Jollibee Kids' Party, the Justice League package comes with game prizes, guestbooks, balloons, and other party favors. Guests will also enjoy a special appearance of Jollibee.

Apart from Justice League, kids can pick from other themes. They can join the Circus Party and have a magical time, look for hidden fortune on a Treasure Adventure Party, or explore their love for animals with the Zoo Party.

What's a party without the Lang Sarap Jollibee delights? Four food packages, all inclusive of regular softdrinks, are offered for as low as P2,760 good for 30 kids. Popo's Package includes Jolly Spaghetti, Jolly Crispy Fries, and Jolly Crunch Twirl, while Mr Yum's Package has additional Regular Yum. Hetty's Package includes Burger Steak Supermeal and Jollibee Sundae, and Twirlie's Package has the Chickenjoy Supermeal and Jollibee Sundae. Those who want a more specialized menu can enjoy Jollibee's Mix-N-Match Package.

With food, venue, decorations, surprises, and other party details already arranged, a Jollibee Kids' Party helps you focus on things that matter. Complete with all the ingredients needed to make special occasions unforgettable, a child's party at Jollibee can make memories last a lifetime.

SEARCH FOR OUTSTANDING PHILIPPINE SOLDIERS

Former Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Narciso Abaya (Ret.) (second from left), joins four other distinguished personalities as members of the final board of judges in the Search for The Outstanding Philippine Soldiers (Tops) for 2006. Other members of the final board are (from left): Sergio S. Cao, Ph.D., chancellor of UP Diliman; Evelyn Singson, president of the Management Association of the Philippines; Amylyn De Quiros, president of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines; and Orlando Casimiro, representing Merceditas Gutierrez of the Office of the Ombudsman. The search is a joint undertaking of the Metrobank Foundation and the Rotary Club of Makati Metro. The final board of judges recently concluded its search and picked the ten best in the military, a mix of commissioned officers and enlisted personnel of the Philippine Army, Air Force and Navy, as well as commissioned officers of the Technical Services. The winners will be presented in awarding ceremonies on March 12 at the Malacañang Palace.

Quality and affordability with Brother's MyHome Series

BROTHER INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES, A leader in home and business IT peripherals is very proud on the release of the latest next generation inkjet all in one's for the home. The comprehensive Multi Function Center line up is uniquely designed to cater the modern home users like you.

Incorporating the functions of a printer, fax machine, copier, scanner, card reader, Pictbridge functions is what MyHome Series offers.

MyHome Series comprises (three 4-in-1s) DCP-130C, DCP330C, and DCP-540CN ; (one 6-in-1s) MFC-240C. A very comprehensive line up for all in one series catering to the diverse and unique needs of each user.

With advanced hardware and software enhancements of the new inkjet machines coupled with new range of genuine consumables, true to life printing can be achieved with every single print. Plus, it wont be a hassle for you to view your pictures using your laptops or personal computers because the MyHome Series could let you print directly from the printer through its Pictbridge functions and its Photocapture Center.

Brother incorporated the amazing 1.5 (picolliter) ink droplet technology, normally found only in high-end ink jet all in ones, to close ink droplet gaps. When used with Innobella Ink & Paper, printouts will have less graininess, greater sharpness and finer definition.

MyHome Series is now available in all Brother Authorize Dealers. For more information you can call Brother Helpdesk at 581-9898 or through our toll free line at 1-800-10-BROTHER.

ProductFILES

Blueberries may lower cholesterol

NEW RESEARCH STUDIES AT THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HAVE revealed that blueberries can also lower cholesterol better than prescription drugs. This is due to the antioxidant compound found in blueberries called pterostilbene. Its effect is similar to a commercial medication, Ciprofibrate that is used to reduce "bad" or LDL cholesterol. Blueberries have been shown to give a similar result to Ciprofibrate without the drug's side effects of muscle pain and nausea. Now you can get your healthy selection of great tasting blueberry juices with TrueBlue Blueberry Juice Cocktails. TrueBlue is currently available in four delicious flavors: Blueberry, Blueberry Green Tea, Blueberry Pomegranate, and Blueberry Cranberry. For inquiries, contact info@suncoastbrands.com.

Pouring passion into a coffee business

GLORIA JEAN'S COFFEES, AMERICA'S WELL-LOVED SPECIALTY FLAVORED beans and Australia's no. 1 coffee chain pours its coffee passion into the hearts of Filipino entrepreneurs all over the country. Its introduction to the Philippine market in the year 2003 brought delightful memories from Filipino travelers to the US with its ubiquitous aromatic smell of specialty flavored beans that is pervasive in major US malls. With its acceptance in the Philippine market and true to its belief in franchising, Gloria Jean's through its Philippine master franchisee, Specialty Beans Phils Inc, embarked on expanding the brand with entrepreneurs with a passion for coffee. For franchise inquiries, you may contact Ramon Balingit, director, Franchising Business Development of Gloria Jean's in the Philippines at 808-6017 loc. 119, or 0917-8957355, e-mail: rbalingit@sbpi.com.ph.

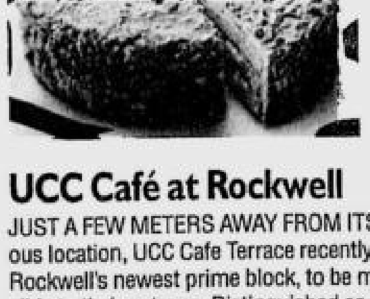
Toshiba showcases the new 68E Series LCD TV

ENCOURAGED BY THE POSITIVE RESPONSE OF THE REGZA 58, Toshiba, the leading innovator of television, is pleased to announce the launching of a new line this year, REGZA 68E Series. REGZA 68E series is engineered by 100Hz technology, Meta brain Pro 100, Toshiba's latest motion enhancement technology that creates and redefines live performance. Digital 100 Frame Booster, doubles the number of frames by creating a new frame to be inserted between the two original frames, thus, being able to reproduce smoother moving images. Now, television aficionados will get to enjoy not only superlative functional value, but also design excellence, which will definitely enhance your homes. TV viewing has never been this exciting. We invite you to be one of the first to own this rare luxury. If you have any question, contact 819-1048 or e-mail teri@toshiba.com.ph.

A gift for kids

KUMON, AN EDUCATIONAL institution whose current method is used by four million students worldwide, continues to nurture children who think big and dream bigger. It has been its mission to equip children with the necessary tools to become self-disciplined individuals capable of meeting life's challenges. Through its Math and Reading programs, they create a learning environment that will not only help improve a child's academic and social skills and nurture them to become achievers in the classroom and, more importantly, in life. To further prepare their students, the company is giving away the new Kumon bag to all current and future Kumon students. New students will receive their Kumon bags upon enrollment while returning students can call their local Kumon Centers for more information on how to receive the Kumon bag. For more details on how to enjoy the benefits of the Kumon Method, visit the nearest Kumon Center or call (02)885-0226 or 1800-1888-0231 toll free or e-mail inquiries to inquiries@kumon.com.ph.

Red Ribbon's 'Must-Have Cake-of-the-Month'



THIS YEAR, RED RIBBON SHOWCASES ITS WONDERFUL cake creations by launching the "Must-Have Cake-of-the-Month" campaign. This campaign successfully re-introduces the many delicious cakes that Red Ribbon currently offers by featuring a cake per month as well as a special occasion to celebrate. This March, make sure to hail your graduates. Try Red Ribbon's Honey Cake! From its heavenly layers of white chiffon with French butter cream to its golden honey crumbs, a Honey Cake brings good cheer to any celebration. Visit a Red Ribbon branch near you today or call 747-7777 for hassle-free delivery.

UCC Café at Rockwell

JUST A FEW METERS AWAY FROM ITS PREVIOUS location, UCC Cafe Terrace recently moved to Rockwell's newest prime block, to be more accessible to their patrons. Distinguished as the first Café to popularize the "siphon brewing method", UCC employs this proven way to serve coffee at its best, as it reduces to the barest minimum the time lag between brewing the coffee and serving it. Aside from offering the finest coffee in town, UCC is also known for their sumptuous selection of Japanese and Western cuisine. Their accommodating service specialists will walk you to a comfortable spot with a garden view and a relaxing ambience, that's perfect for casual business meetings and social get-togethers.

BITS Clips

The Body and Mind Wellness Series in Manila

DISCOVER AND EXPERIENCE A special gateway to body and mind wellness as a wide range of healing trainings, meditations and services will be offered in Manila. Gaining worldwide presence, the sessions will be conducted by System Brahma Satya founder and master healer Deepak Hardikar in Dasmariñas Village, Makati City from March 16 to 26. The series is composed of workshops, guided meditations and services that will focus on body healing and mind evolution which are oriented towards higher spiritual growth. The methods on offer can heal acute or chronic diseases, body ailments, stress and tensions, emotional and mental disturbances, karmic fields, relationships, situations and even objects. For inquiries, contact Kanchan Sadhwani (0917-7913369), Edlynn Ng (0917-5336869), PopC Jaranilla (0917-8480504) and Jyoti Murjani (0927-3531511) or visit www.brahmasatya.com.

FDR Memorial School 60th year

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL School in Angat, Bulacan shall celebrate its Diamond Jubilee (60th Anniversary) on April 28. This is the time when they will meet their old friends and acquaintances and re-kindle the camaraderie among the alumni. Please come and join this important event. You may contact Cecille Sayo - Digitel (044)641-1435 or 0917-3077748; Rodolfo Giron, 0915-7872622; Felizmin Imperial Fresnosa - (02)272-0290; Josefina Sotto Bringas - (044)671-6062 or 0919-7835003.

An art exhibit for a cause

TINTERO ART AND DESIGN (TINTERO) IS A multi-disciplinary graphic design studio based in the Philippines, which aspires to make a lasting mark on visual culture and to contribute to the arts and moral landscape. Bringing this vision a notch higher, they present "The Hands That Feed: Art Exhibit for a Cause", a 3-day artwork exhibit. This event will be held on March 12-14, at the Pan Pacific Hotel, Manila. This event shall bring together contemporary artists of different expertise but with a common mission of supporting the feeding program for the children in Payatas and Baseco compound of Quezon City. The proceeds of the 3-day exhibit shall be used to fund the said feeding programs. For more info contact Candy Manzano, organizer/manager at the following numbers: telefax: 448-551-07, mobile: 0917-6063222, e-mail: tintero_artandddesignstudio@yahoo.com.ph.

26th Annual Chest Confab

THE PHILIPPINE COLLEGE OF CHEST PHYSICIANS will hold its 26th Annual Chest Convention on March 6-9 at the Hotel Philippine Plaza. This year's theme, "Synergy and Integration in Chest Medicine," highlights the latest developments in pulmonology and critical care alongside allied specialties involved in the field of chest medicine. One-day registration for interested non-member delegates are offered on the last day which will cover multi-specialty issues like TB and asthma during pregnancy, lung malignancies, pre-operative pulmonary clearance, adult vaccinations and legal documents in medical care. For inquiries, contact the PCCP Secretariat: tel. nos. (632)924-9204; telefax no. (632)924-0144; e-mail - pccp@zpdee.net.

The sweet truth about honey

HONEY CONTAINS A VARIETY OF FLAVONOIDS and phenolic acids which act as antioxidants, scavenging and eliminating free radicals. It's easy to enjoy the benefits of honey. Gardenia's Honey Oat Loaf for instance, created in partnership with Quaker Oats, combines all the nutritive goodness of honey and oats in one great-tasting loaf. Moreover, daily consumption of honey raises blood levels of protective antioxidant compounds in humans. This is according to research presented at the 227th meeting of the American Chemical Society in Anaheim, California. On the other hand, quakeroatmeal.com says oats offer many nutritional benefits by lowering one's risk of developing heart disease and certain types of cancers and promotes satiety, an important component of weight management. So reach for a Gardenia Honey Oat Loaf and discover the sweet truth of honey and the goodness of oats in one bread.

Speechpower consultant is a UP-ICW fellow for drama

THE UP INSTITUTE OF CREATIVE WRITING (UP-ICW) names Jose Dennis C. Teodosio as a fellow for drama in the forthcoming 46th UP-ICW National Writers Workshop to be held at AIM Lodge, Camp John Hay, Baguio on March 25 to April 1. Teodosio is a senior consultant at Speechpower, the country's top communication training center. He authorized books in public speaking and leadership training and designed modules for language proficiency tests like the IELTS, TOEFIBT, SPEAK, OET. At present, he handles oral and written communication courses.

MWSS : CELEBRATING 129 YEARS OF SERVICE

CHAIR Oscar Garcia

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) vows to fast track the implementation of its plans and programs in order to achieve an improved supply of potable water in Metro Manila in line with its 129th anniversary. In his speech during the anniversary program, MWSS chair Oscar I. Garcia noted that the history of MWSS should help employees and all those concerned appreciate the role of MWSS. He also emphasized that the institution's mandate is to strictly monitor and regulate the performance of the water concessionaires. Meantime, administrator Lorenzo H. Jamora who is only 34 days old in MWSS urged the support of everyone in order that the institution can move forward in attaining its goals. Jamora intends to hasten the realization of long-term programs geared towards the establishment of alternative sources of water.

BOYSEN PACIFIC PAINTS JOINS WORLDBEX

Unfolding building extraordinaire and construction excellence in the country, Worldbex Services International (WSI) and Boysen Pacific Paints prepare together for the much awaited 12th Philippine World Building and Construction Exposition (Worldbex 2007) happening on March 14-18, at the World Trade Center and an adjoining air-conditioned tent, and at the Philippine Trade Training Center. Spearheading the partnership are (from left) architect Francisco Flameño, WSI executive director, WSI founding chair Joseph Ang and Ruben Cueto, marketing manager for Boysen. For more information, you may contact WSI at (632)531-6350; 534-3615; and 531-6374 or e-mail at info@worldbex.com.

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WESTERN UNION LAUNCHES REWARDS CARD

The Western Union Gold Card loyalty program introduces customers to a world of privileges, with two tiers of rewards - basic and premium benefits. Customers get exclusive access to benefits such as discounts at Western Union's co-promotion establishments such as DHL, Goldilocks, Air Philippines, HBC and David's Salon. From left: Patria Chong of Air Philippines, Tessa Rago of DHL, Pinky Yee of Goldilocks, Anna Romano, Patricia Riingen, Shirleen Velasquez of Western Union, David Charlton of David's Salon and Edgar Caper of HBC pose after the unveiling of the Gold Card.

SPEED-TECH ULTIMATE RIDE

The ride is on for the Speed-Tech Ultimate Ride: X-Force Racing Grand Tourisimo II and GPX Cyber Formula Challenge Racing Campaign 2006 - 2007. Shown is the contract signing between Hero TV, Kids Connex Marketing Corp and Speed-Tech Toys Int'l Corp. Photo shows (standing from left) Hero TV sales assistant for power bundling Tonette Eder, Hero TV segment producer Vaniza Pachoco, Speed-Tech Toys marketing manager Giselle Lutero, Kids Connex marketing director Mary Jane Lim; (seated from left) Hero TV channel producer Eric Ang Go, Hero TV channel director Jocelyn Go, Speed-Tech Toys GM Ruben Yu, Kids Connex managing director Johnson Lim. Check out X-Force and GPX Cyber Formula Remote Control/Battery Operated toys and see a different hybrid of toy vehicles today. Available at leading toy shops and department stores. Exclusively distributed by Speed-Tech Toys Int'l Corp.

P25
CALL & TEXT UNLIMITED

FREE CALLS AT BAYWALK FROM SUN CELLULAR

People trooped to the Sun Cellular booth recently at the Baywalk in Roxas Boulevard as Sun offered a Valentine's treat of free local and international calls to their loved ones. The Libreng Tawag activity, held in cooperation with the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) gave the people in the area a chance to call and greet their friends and relatives on Valentine's Day. Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and NTC Director Inday Deles were present to show their support for the Libreng Tawag activity, which attracted a sizeable crowd who happily availed of the free call service. Sun Cellular continues to provide the best-value products and services in the market today as it recently launched its new SIM packs that are pre-loaded with 24/7 Call and Text Unlimited and free texts to other networks, and its most affordable Call and Text Unlimited - the 1-day CTU for only P25.

Gov't eyes ₱40B for infra projects

Removal of fiscal perks

By Doris C. Dumlao

BELTRAN

THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTS to free up as much as P40 billion in funds for infrastructure spending each year from its proposed program to streamline fiscal incentives.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran told reporters that the estimated gain was based on a study of actual tax incentives foregone each year from 2000 to 2006 under the existing framework, a tightening of which would thus give fiscal managers more elbow room once the rationalization bill has been approved by Congress.

The Department of Finance is hoping that discussions on the bill would resume as soon as the members of the next Congress take their oath and convene after the elections.

"We're going to limit the granting of income tax holidays and eventually phase it out completely," Beltran said.

Based on the trade department's estimate, there are now about 1,000 registered enterprises with unexpired income tax holiday perks.

Under the fiscal incentive rationalization framework supported by the DOF, the tax perks would be limited to the export sector and to investments in less developed areas of the country.

Likewise, all enterprises will pay the consumption tax or value-added tax (VAT) and duties but they will be allowed to recover these once they ship out their goods for export.

"We'll set up a trust fund so everyone can get their money back," Beltran said.

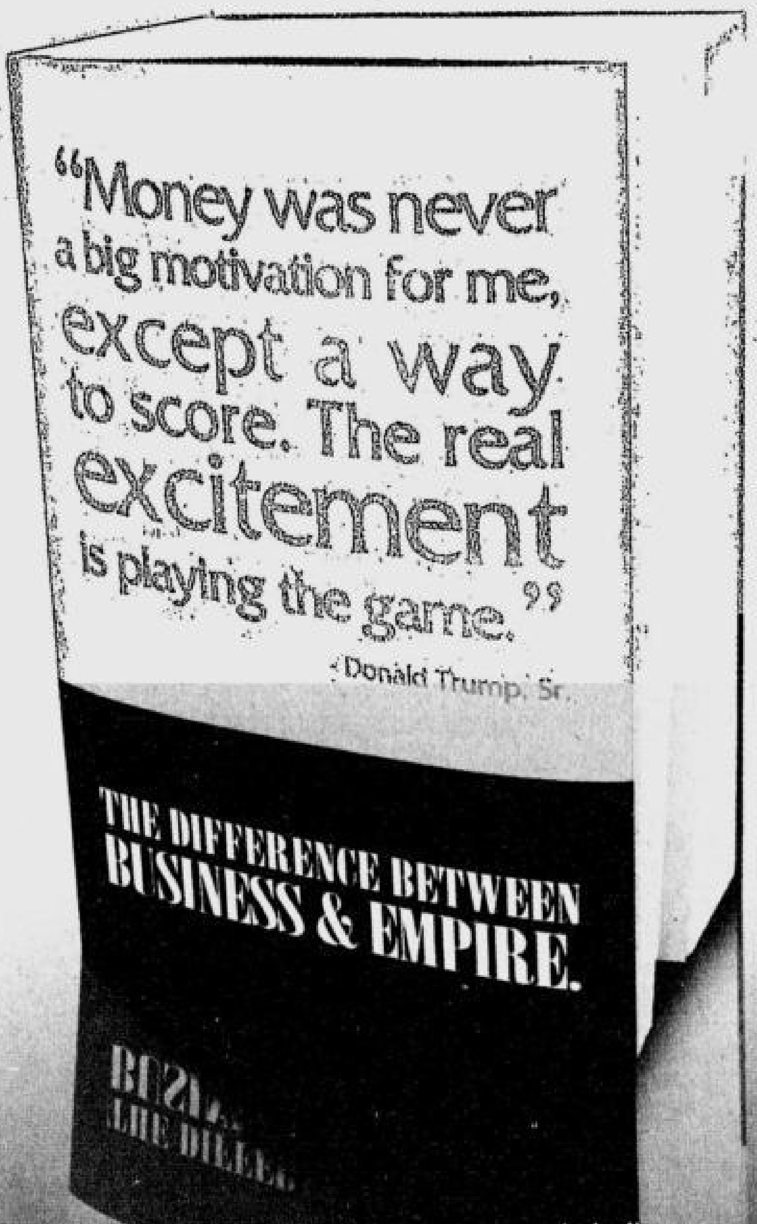
As part of efforts to streamline fiscal incentives, the Bureau of Internal Revenue has signed separate memoranda of agreement with the Board of Investments and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority to plug "disturbing" loopholes in the country's fiscal incentive system for investors.

The agreements provide for a tighter framework in the monitoring and release of fiscal incentives, particularly the income tax holiday and the 5-percent tax on gross income, in order to safeguard the government's fiscal gains.

After having slashed its budget deficit from P146.5 billion in 2005 to an eight-year low of P62.2 billion in 2006, the national government believes it is on track to meet an aggressive goal of a balanced budget by 2008.

Recent fiscal gains are expected to allow the government to invest an additional P369 billion over the next four years to build infrastructure and to improve social services such as education.

For this year, the plan is to help raise the competitiveness of the Mindanao agribusiness region by investing about P5 billion to build the Laguindingan and Butuan airports, access roads to Ro-Ro (roll on, roll off) ports and the Surigao-Davao coastal road.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- Donald Trump, Sr.
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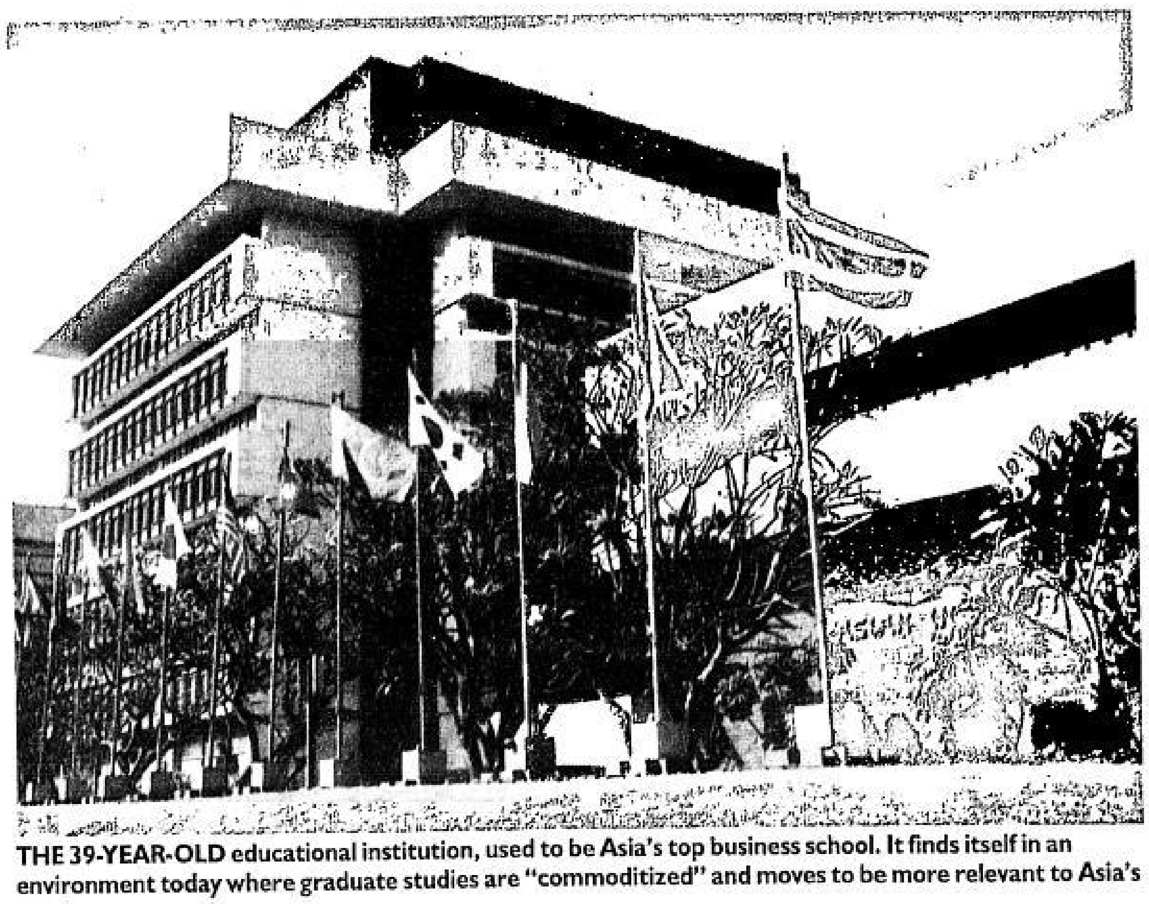
AIM retools to improve its grades

Tweaks curriculum amid weak enrollment; to introduce more short courses

By Daxim L. Lucas



THE 39-YEAR-OLD educational institution, used to be Asia's top business school. It finds itself in an environment today where graduate studies are "commoditized" and moves to be more relevant to Asia's needs.

ESTRADA

GRADUATE STUDIES IN BUSINESS are increasingly becoming "commoditized" with the proliferation of business schools in Asia, according to the head of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM).

In addition, student enrollment in business schools worldwide have been falling in recent years, prompting the AIM to revamp its curriculum and program offerings to address these issues.

In a press conference, AIM president Francis G. Estrada said the school has experienced a decline in enrollments along with the global trend, but added that the institution's number of students has stabilized of late.

"Our enrollment [numbers] have been flat over the last five years," he told journalists during the school's 39th year anniversary celebrations in Makati City.

Estrada pointed out, however, interest is strong in the school's short courses, especially among corporate clients who cannot afford to lose their executives for long periods.

"Our executive education is exploding," he said, referring to AIM's certificate programs that cater to specific management fields.

To address the changes, Estrada said AIM is reorienting itself to be "the school of choice" for any manager or entrepreneur wanting to do business in Asia.

"We will retool our curriculum for the unique Asian environment," he said.

The school will also launch a program aimed at teaching Islamic management practices, beyond just traditional Islamic banking. The program will cater mainly to businessmen in Indonesia, Malaysia Brunei Darussalam.

Finally, Estrada said AIM will introduce a new program that will focus on teaching managers to run .family businesses, which remains the main mode of business in Asia.

The AIM chief conceded that the business school landscape has changed significantly since the school was founded in 1968.

"At that time, AIM was the only game in town," he said, noting that the region now has a plethora of good business schools, including several that are associated with US-based institutions.

In particular, AIM is experiencing heavy competition from schools based in Singapore, Hong Kong and even China for a declining number of students.

"Graduate education has become a commodity all over the world," he said, adding that Asia remains the exception since it is still considered a growth area for business schools.

In general, he said that enrollment in MBA (Masters in Business Administration) has declined by 10 percent, except in Asia.

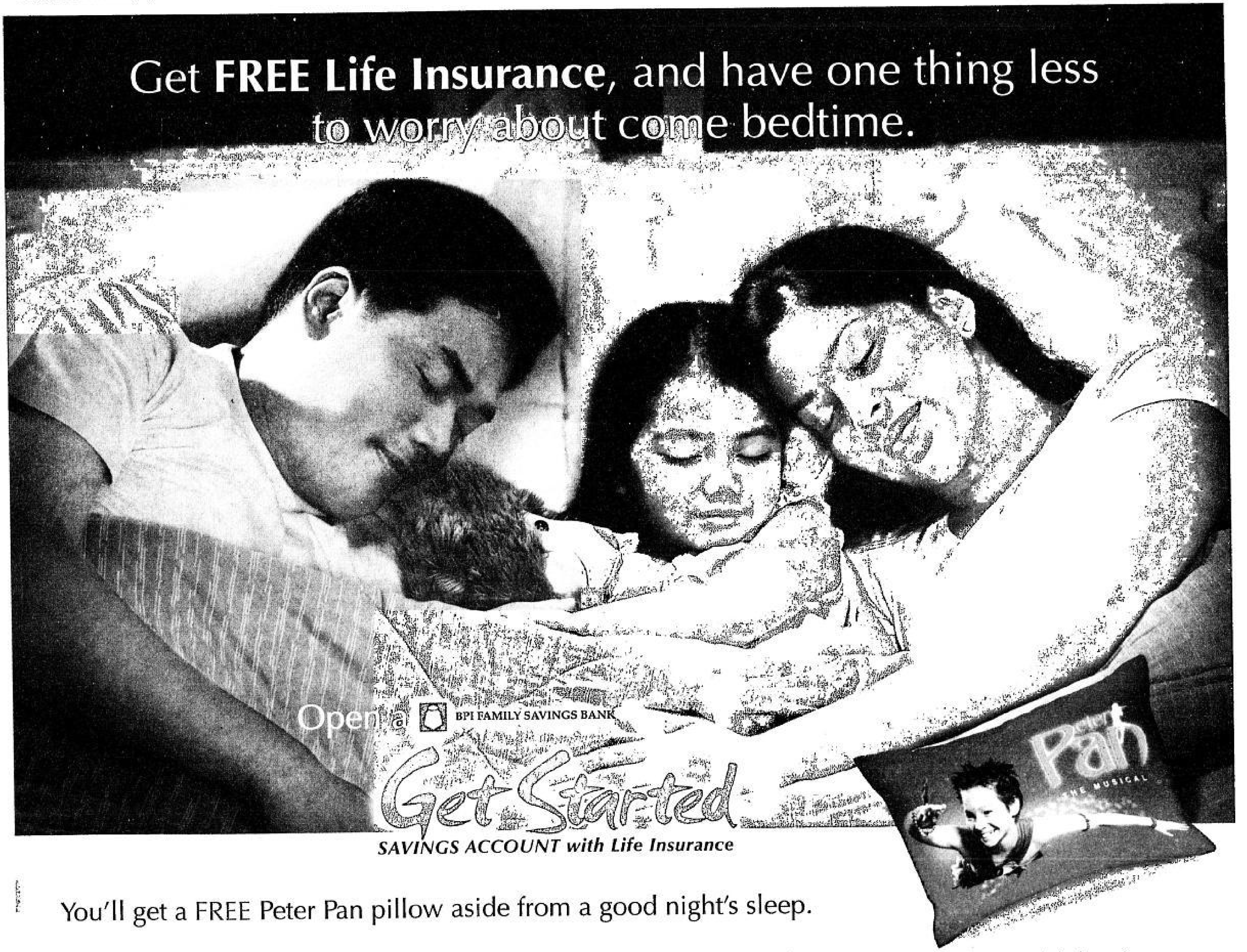
"We're in the most exciting area of the world," Estrada said.

The AIM Alumni Association held the first Asian Business Conference last week adopting the theme AIM for a New Asia: Unlocking Opportunities.

The AIM AA gathered foreign and local speakers who tackled various topics on getting ahead in Asia.

In his talk, Mark Fuller, a former Harvard Graduate School of Business professor and chair and CEO of The Monitor Group, described as a firm which specializes in the conversion of informed choice into timely action, talked about Unlocking New Opportunities for Innovative Entrepreneurship.

He enumerated three imperatives to this: The need to specialize in human assets; the need to invest in innovation knowledge and assets, and the need for a supportive context for entrepreneurship.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THE SONY Ericsson W610i with headset

THE SONY Ericsson W200i for the mass market

THE SONY Ericsson W880i in black, with matching headset

3G music phones are hot

By Riza T. Olchondra

SONY ERICSSON SEES A growing market demand for 3G music phones. Not really surprising, given the Filipinos penchant for music.

"We see the Walkman music segment as a big product portfolio for 2007. The 3G segment of music phones, especially in the Philippines, has been growing and even operator comments indicate that demand is up. This is good for us," said Dennis Manzano, general manager for the mobile maker's Philippine office, during the formal launch of three new Sony Ericsson phones.

A report from technology research firm IDC said Sony Ericsson has vaulted past LG Electronics Co. as the No. 4 cellular phone maker after Nokia, Motorola and Samsung Electronic.

Nokia's shipments in 2006 rose 31 percent to 348 million phones for a 34.1 percent share of the market, up from its 2005 market share of 31.8 percent. Motorola's annual shipments rose 49 percent to 217 million handsets, its market share expanding to 21.3 percent from 17.5 percent in 2005.

IDC said shipments soared 61.5 percent to 16.1 million handsets at Sony Ericsson, expanding its market share to 8.8 percent compared with 6.5 percent a year earlier. LG's phone shipments rose 5 percent to 17 million phones, but its market share slipped to 5.8 percent, down from the year-ago level of 6.6 percent.

To gain a stronger hold in the music phone segment, Sony Ericsson, Japan's Sony Corp. and Sweden's Ericsson AB, released a trio of 3G Walkman phones: the W880i, W610i and W880i.

The three are 3G phones that support real-time video calls, faster video MMS, video and audio streaming, and fast file downloads. Mobiles games, music files, new applications, images and e-mail attachments can also be downloaded.

The Sony Ericsson W880i Walkman phone, which retails at P24,500, is the company's first super-thin phone model at only 9.4mm thick.

It is about as thick as a single-CD case but holds as many as 900 full-length music tracks or almost 70 CD albums. The high storage capacity comes from the provided 1-GB memory stick. Disc2Phone software lets one easily convert CD music files to Walkman and industry standard formats.

Aside from the usual 3G features, the W880i's Bluetooth audio streaming feature allows wireless track access through a Stereo Bluetooth Headset such as the HBH-DS970. Tracks stored in the phone can also be streamed directly to a home or car stereo through the new music Bluetooth receiver called MBR-100. Users can listen to as much as 18 hours of music playback.

The music camera phone W610i, meanwhile, packs 470 music tracks on its provided 512 MB memory stick and retails below P15,000.

Listening is extendable to 25 hours of playback. The phone also has FM radio, Bluetooth audio streaming, e-mail capability, and two-megapixel camera with auto focus and advanced lighting. Video recording and playback are also supported.

Like the W880i, the W610i,comes with the TrackID music recognition application. The feature lets the user record a clip of an unknown music track onto their phone and receive notification of the track name, artist and album.

Both the W880i and the W610i have the Pict-Bridge feature that enables the phone user to print digital images directly through a compatible printer.

The Swedish-Japanese joint venture has also released a Walkman phone for the mass market and for first-time music phone users: the W200i.

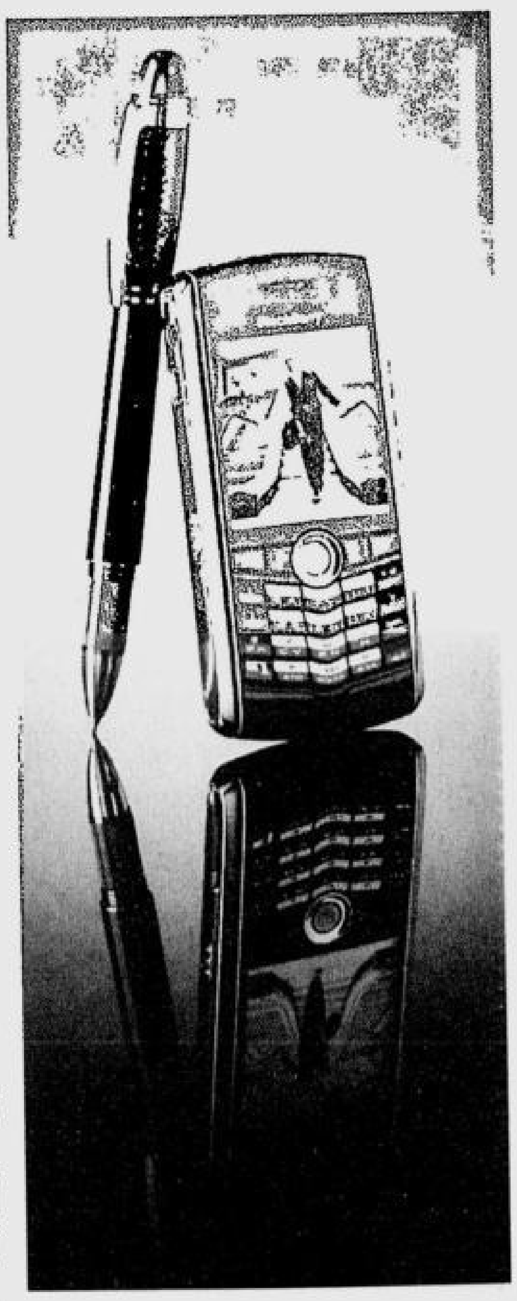
The phone is affordable in 3G standard at around P8,500 but is still packed with Walkman functions, such as a dedicated player button, a 128 MB memory stick for storing 37 full length tracks, an FM radio, alarm clock, and built-in speakerphone.

Its stereo headset HPM-64 is the first accessory to feature Bass Reflex, an innovation that preserves audio quality when the bass is turned up. The W200i also has a VGA camera with 4x digital zoom, an integrated photo album, Internet browser, PC synchronization, infrared connectivity, and video messaging.

"Pricing is now more spread out and operators are aggressively offering their own plans. We are hoping to reach more users this way," Manzano said.

BlackBerry sports new look

By Abigail L. Ho



WHEN ONE HEARS THE WORD BLACKBERRY, the images that come to mind are: a. a black or very dark purple fruit, b. a bottle of jam or a piece of pie, c. a personal digital assistant (PDA)-cum-mobile phone.

Over the past few years, however, Research in Motion (RIM) has made the inedible BlackBerry a household name as well—at least in companies that want to empower their workforce to do their work remotely and among upwardly mobile individuals who do not want to lose touch with their personal and business contacts.

The BlackBerry's claim to fame: its push e-mail function that actually "pushes" e-mail to users' BlackBerry devices, instead of users having to "pull" their e-mail from the server.

As a result, with a BlackBerry device, sending and receiving e-mail becomes as easy as sending and receiving text messages.

One drawback of having a BlackBerry device, however, is having to lug around a rather bulky device that looks a bit off when used for voice calls (imagine a PDA-sized device plastered on your cheek while taking a phone call).

Having form-conscious BlackBerry users in mind, RIM Asia Pacific vice president Norm Lo said in a briefing last week that the company would be focusing more on aesthetics when it rolls out new BlackBerry models in the future.

"We're moving into a design language. We'll offer products that are sexier and more fashionable," he said.

He said RIM wanted individuals to see the BlackBerry as a mobile device that could help users balance their work and personal lives.

While it would still continue producing PDA-sized models with big screens, he said RIM would start rolling out smaller models with sleeker designs and more multimedia functions.

"We believe many of our users would still want to use BlackBerry devices with big screens. But there are consumers who want sleeker handsets. We just want to provide more choices for the market," he said.

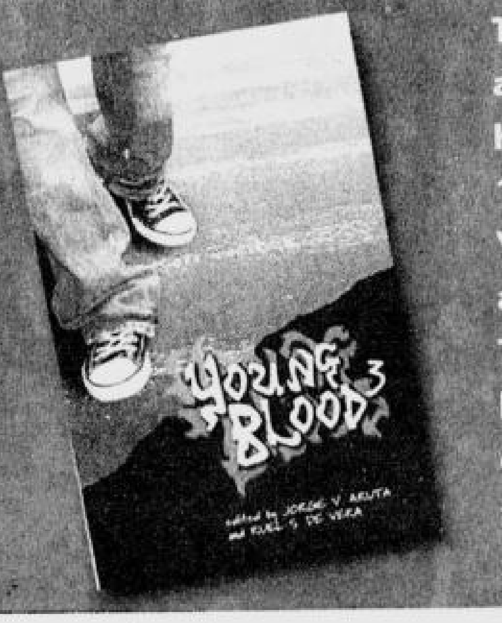
RIM, through Ayala-led mobile operator Globe Telecom Inc., recently released in the Philippines the BlackBerry Pearl, which measures just 4.2 inches x 1.97 inches x 0.57 inches and weighs only 3.1 ounces.

The quad-band GSM/GPRS and EDGE-enabled handset comes with a QWERTY keyboard and is the first BlackBerry device with a 1.3-megapixel camera.

It also features a media player and a stereo headset jack, allowing users to enjoy their favorite music and videos on the go.

The Pearl's 64MB built-in flash memory is expandable to up to 2GB via a microSD card slot.

"There's a lot of demand from the consumer side—for functions that mix lifestyle with functionality. With the BlackBerry Pearl, we offer a holistic view on the design. It also contains a wide range of consumer applications (beyond the conventional BlackBerry offerings)," Lo said.



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Is triple bottom line accounting two bottom lines too many?

MAPping THE FUTURE

Dr. Nicelo S. Poblador

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) has in recent years become a by-word in the corporate world. It is now required to include commitment to CSR in company statements of "core values."

To demonstrate their commitments to good corporate citizenship, firms are enjoined to adhere to any of a number of compliance standards for CSR.

Among these are the Sustainability Reporting Guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and AccountAbility's AA1000 standards. Both have adopted their own versions of what is known as Triple Bottom Line (3BL) accounting.

3BL accounting represents an attempt to expand traditional financial reporting to take into consideration the impact of the firm's activities on the wellbeing of society and on the environment.

3BL is by far the most tangible attempt at establishing guidelines for CSR in terms of measurable data that can be accurately reported and effectively audited.

The effectiveness of 3BL as a means of insuring sustainable development rests on the premise that the external effects of a firm's activities can be measured objectively using a number of standard indicators that are both observable and verifiable.

The additional social and environmental bottom lines are intended to complement the traditional financial bottom line (net profit for the period) by showing the net impact of the firm's activities on society and on the environment.

3BL implicitly assumes that it is possible to arrive at a single figure that reflects the firm's net impact on society and on the environment by adding the social and environmental accounting reports.

Herein lies the rub

Considering that the data shown in the social and environmental accounting statements are expressed in different units of measure (for example, in terms of percentage of total energy derived from renewable sources, or in terms of volume of a particular greenhouse gas emitted during a given period), it is not possible to arrive at a single measure of the net impact of a firm's activities on either society or the environment.

By contrast, all entries in the PL statements are expressed in terms of the same unit of measure of value—in units of currency.

While it is possible to compare firms in terms of each specific social or environmental indicator, it is not possible to rank business enterprises in terms of their overall impact on society or on the environment on the basis alone of 3BL.

Current discussions on 3BL have tended to skirt an even more fundamental issue.

To our minds, of far greater importance to managers is what 3BL implies for the nuts and bolt issues of running a corporation. The relevant question to ask is: "What does 3BL imply for strategic choices and operational decisions?"

Let's face it. Corporate managers are hired, evaluated and compensated for their contribution to shareholder value. Their main concern therefore is to generate profits for their employers.

Most corporate managers view GRI and AA1000 standards not as useful guidelines for managerial decision making but as externally-imposed control measures that further restrict their range of choices.

To the resource-constrained executive, these sanctions can be met only at the expense of a smaller financial bottom line. Under such a zero-sum situation, full compliance with the GRI guidelines is impossible, and the best that can be expected are minimal, window-dressing endeavors on the part of corporate managers. Moreover, due to significant information asymmetries and the natural tendency of corporate managers to deliberately conceal damaging information, the agency costs required to monitor and to insure compliance will tend to be prohibitive.

From a somewhat more enlightened perspective, the trade off between compliance and profit is positive. In pursuing strategies based on stakeholder theories, devoting more resources to create value for society is seen as a way of enhancing long-run (i.e. "sustainable") profitability.

In our view, the major challenge is to align social and environmental objectives with the strategic goals of business. This is done not by ramming a long-list of sanctions down the throats of corporate managers, but by showing that pursuing social and environmental goals is good for business.

Two things are necessary for this purpose:

1. Translate the standard 3BL metrics into a common scale that would allow managers to determine how much corporate resources should be devoted to social and environmental targets in order to enhance shareholder value.

This requires, among other things, further research to determine in economic value terms the effects of social- and environmental-friendly activities. Only in this way can proper tradeoffs be established.

2. Rethink the system of evaluating and rewarding corporate managers to align their own personal and professional goals with the long-run interests their shareholders and of all other corporate stakeholders.

CSR and 3BL are timely ideas that should be pursued with vigor. However, rather than imposing additional constraints on today's harried corporate managers, they should instead provide meaningful and practical guidelines for pursuing their legitimate profit-seeking objectives in a manner that would also create value for society.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author, who is an active academic and a knowledge management consultant. He is the author of "STRATEGY deMYTHicized: Why Today's Business Models Fail to Deliver." Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

His hobby in the 80s turns him into telco veteran

BACK IN THE DAYS WHEN HAM radios were cool Joey Uy was already training to rise up the ranks of the communications arena. What started as a hobby of tinkering with ham radios transformed and developed into a lucrative venture in sales and installation of two-way radio communications equipment.

In the 90s he partnered with the biggest telecom distributor in the country at that time. Uy helped the telco company grow, spanning the technology transition from analog to GSM.

Timing and technology were both on Joey's side. The boom of SMS in the late 90s propelled the Philippine telecom industry forward at a fast pace.

It was the perfect time to create his own company. Thus, Telecom Concepts Inc. was established on May 25, 1998. The company started when a group of telecoms professionals decided to engage in marketing and distribution of mobile technology.

Telecom Concept Inc. (TCI) was a major distributor of Samsung and LG mobile phones in the Philippines. Since then TCI has expanded to include operator prepaid cards for Globe and Smart and Sun Cellular. Other phone manufacturers who are partnered with TCI are LG Electronics and just recently, the Dutch electronics giant, Philips.

From a retail trading business, TCI grew into a holding company which provides management and business strategy to its subsidiaries also engaged in the wireless communication technology. The TCI group of companies include E-Phone Co. Inc., First Telecom Phils. Inc. and Load.com.ph.

Through Load.com.ph you can do online electronic loading system. Anyone can load their prepaid cell phones anywhere in the world, anytime, via the Internet. Electronic PIN's such as online game Top-Ups are also available! Load.com.ph's Mobile Electronic Loading System allows mobile phone subscribers with ordinary SIM's, whether prepaid or postpaid, from any telephone operator, to electronically load their own cell phone or electronically load another person's cell phone wirelessly via plain cell-to-cell SMS.

When asked about his targets for his 20th year in the industry, Uy plans is to sell half a million phones. His ambition comes from confidence in his newest partner, Philips.

"Philips products are really excellent. The most outstanding feature is the battery life. Imagine not having to charge your phone for 6 days! Picture all this at a reasonable price."

"Apart from their products being good, Philips takes good care of their partners. Philips puts top priority not just on their business partners but more importantly the end-customers, and this helps us a lot to promote Philips more."

At 76, Oscar Lopez reaches his peak

From page B2-4

and other trekkers from various companies of the Lopez Group up the slopes of Mt. Pulag on Feb. 17, 2007.

Sight to behold

The group left Baguio for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) station in Ambangeg for a mandatory briefing by park superintendent Emerita Albas. From there they proceeded to the Ranger station in Babadak through rough roads for a quick lunch before taking off in nine groups. The hike to Camp 2 took four hours. By the time the campsite was reached at 5 p.m., all the tents were up and ready for occupancy through the efficiency of the University of the Philippines (UP) Mountaineers and its band of local "sherpas."

Feb. 16, the eve of the climb to the summit, was cold but clear. The stars were out in full force, twinkling as far as the eye could see in every direction. A trained eye could spot an occasional jet plane or satellite passing overhead. It was a sight to behold.

Stargazing was how the Mt. Everest Team's Dr. Ted Esguerra (expedition doctor), members Pastor Emata (the second Filipino to scale Everest on May 18, 2006), Noelle Wenceslao and Carina Dayondon (first females) spent that evening. Leo Oracion (the first Filipino to scale Everest on May 17, 2006) and two other members chose to rest, while Valdez and Fred Jamili (former president of the Mountaineering Federation of the Philippines Inc.) chose to join a group of merrymakers before calling it a day.

The final climb

Camp 2 is the DENR's designated camping site for Mt. Pulag trekkers and the holding area for those who contract high altitude sickness. It is large enough to carry as many as 120 campers comfortably within respectable distance from each other.

The trekkers awoke at 2 a.m. on Feb. 17 to prepare for the final climb. Hot cups of coffee helped raise body warmth and keep the single-digit chill of early morning at bay. Power bars and trail food were stuffed in pockets, cameras and headlamps checked.

At 3:30 a.m., a long and winding single file of what looked like fireflies marched off to watch the sun rise from the vantage point of the mountaintop. It took two hours at a steady slow pace in the dark to reach it just in time. As the trekkers congratulated one another, the horizon gradually brightened, starting from a blue haze that stretched in both directions until it became a burst of yellow, orange and red to usher in the rising sun. Below was a calm sea of clouds that covered much of the mountain range.

Prayers of thanksgiving

For the next hour, there were lots of backslapping, picture taking and silent prayers of thanksgiving. We stood there in awe of Nature's majesty. It was enough to remind the forgetful that there is a God to behold, a superior power that made the universe and holds it together.

From the starting point in Baguio up to the time that the summit was reached, a team of doctors and paramedics monitored vital signs such as blood pressure, oxygen saturation level and heart rate. Except for a handful that suffered from leg cramps, high altitude sickness and gastroenteritis, Lopez and everyone else's registered normal.

Demanding exercise

The Pulag climb was a demanding organizational and logistics exercise. Expedition organizer Rafael Alunan III, president of First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp. (FPIDC), credited Rico de Manzana (First Philippine Holdings Corp. and Lopez Lifelong Wellness Team) for executing the expedition plan with German-like precision with the help of Isagani Velasquez (FPIDC and Wellness Team) and Bernie Cavida of the UP Mountaineering Club. Food, transport, porter, quartering, safety and emergency requirements were orchestrated with admirable efficiency.

The eternal message

Lopez and the First Philippine Mt. Everest Team are trying to deliver the same message—that adversity should not be a bar to achievement. Both had personal goals to reach the summits of their choice. But on a higher plane, their message is, with commitment, obsession and passion, any challenge can be overcome.

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At 76, Oscar Lopez reaches his peak

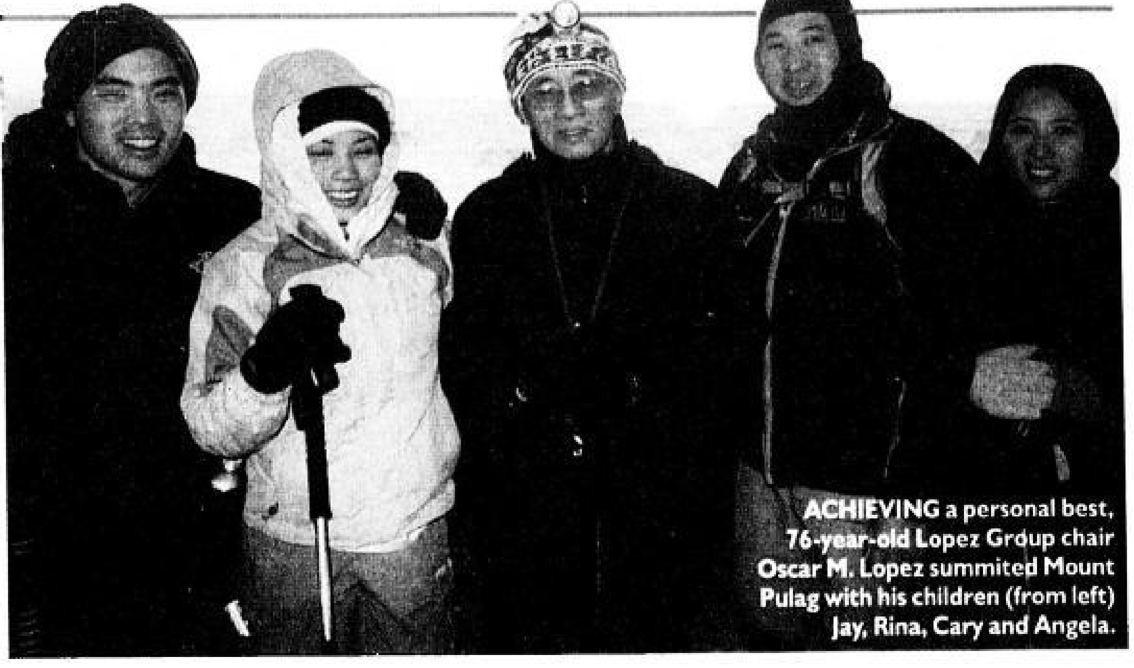
AT OVER 9,700 FEET ABOVE SEA level, Mt. Pulag is the highest peak in Luzon. Its area is in excess of 11,000 hectares spread over three provinces—Nueva Vizcaya, Benguet and Ifugao.

Lopez Group chair Oscar M. Lopez, a fitness buff, had been wanting to climb this mountain for the last four years, but was not allowed by his personal physician for medical reasons.

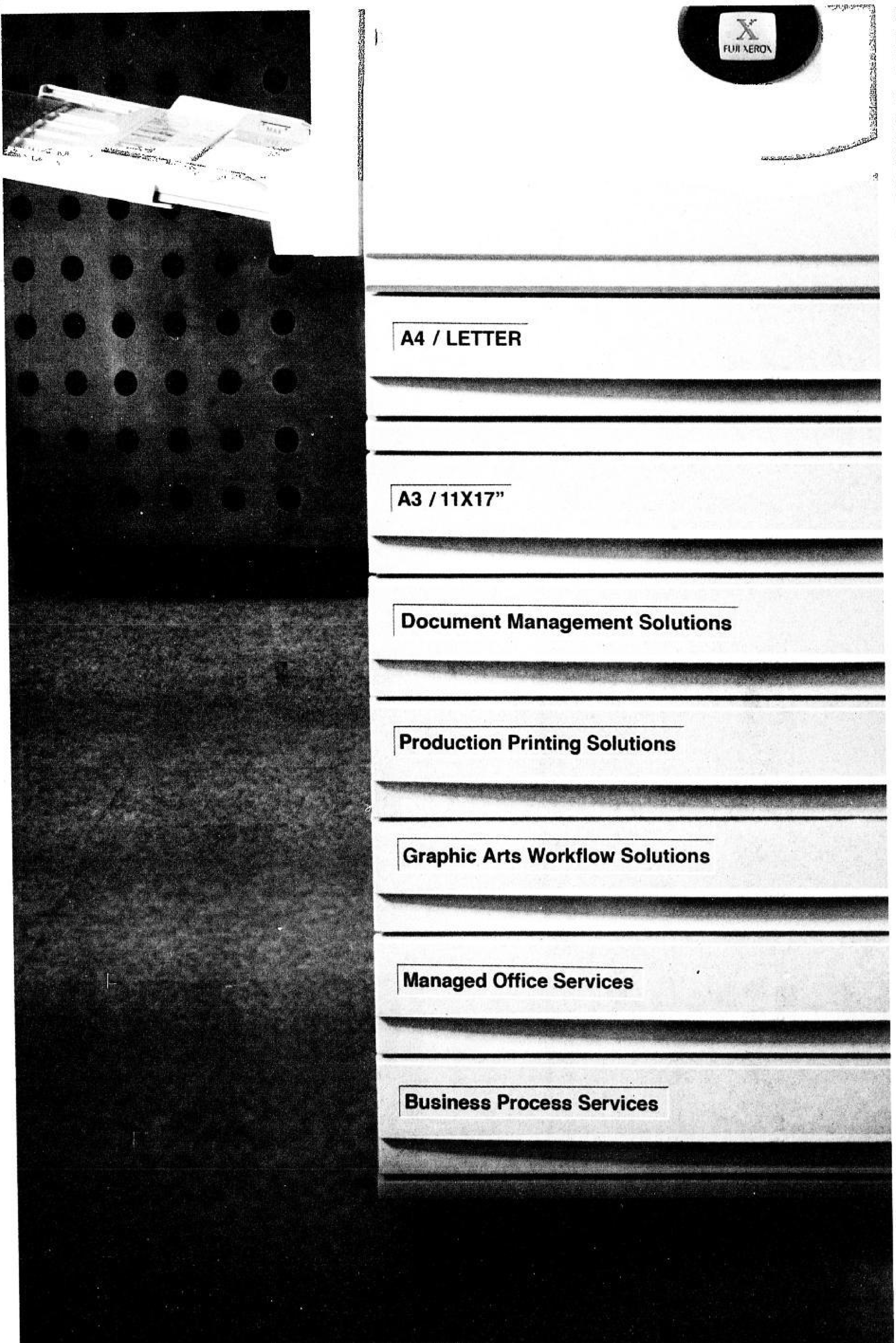
Obsessed by this dream, Lopez passionately committed himself to a regimen that included physical exercise, proper nutrition and a moderate and healthy lifestyle. In the summer of 2006, he successfully summited the 7,500-feet Mt. Santo Tomas in Batangas. After this feat, his doctor finally yielded and cleared him for Mt. Pulag.

Tapping the support of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Team and its expedition leader Art Valdez for what may be called an adventure of a lifetime for the 76-year-old businessman, Lopez led sons Cary and Jay, daughters Rina and Angela

AT 76/ B2-3



ACHIEVING a personal best, 76-year-old Lopez Group chair Oscar M. Lopez summited Mount Pulag with his children (from left) Jay, Rina, Cary and Angela.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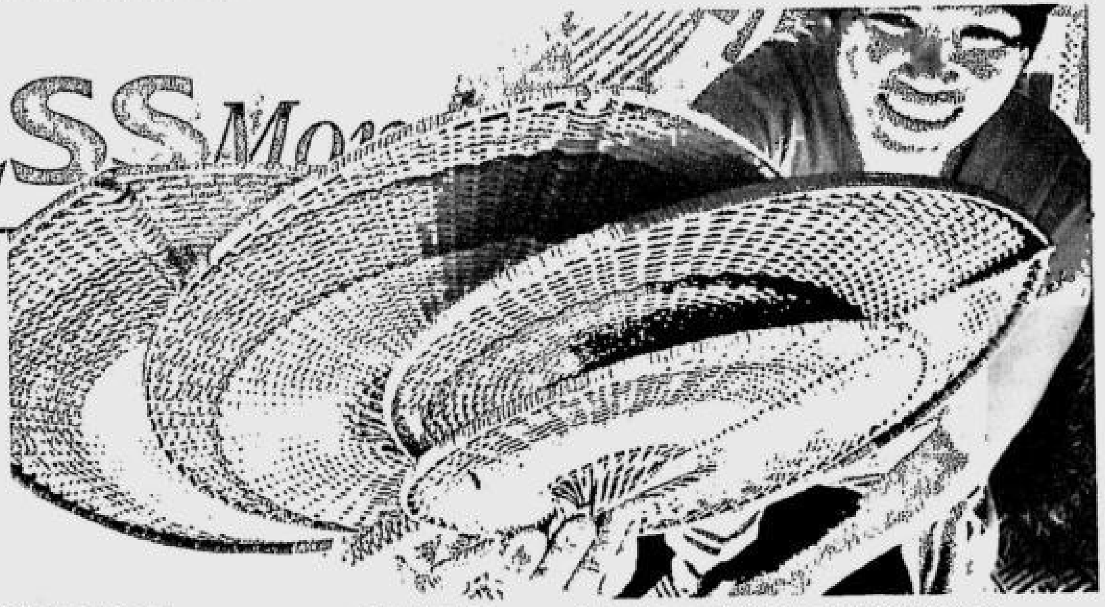
BUSINESS

More than just a *flower parade*

Group taps festival to help worthy causes



PALANAN Fans made by Palanan Wilderness Development Cooperative

EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—OFTEN CRITIcized for selling out, the Baguio Flower Festival has actually been a good vehicle for philanthropy.

An exhibition float promoting biofuel tried to blend into a sea of colorful floats flashing product labels that paraded through Session Road, the main street here, on Sunday.

An overseas worker, who had just returned from Hong Kong, paid for a stall at the "Session Road in Bloom" bazaar so she could sell beaded trinkets that OFWs make in their spare time.

One "Session Road in Bloom" stall displays a large donation box that is slowly being filled up with used school bags, notebooks and slippers.

Employees of the Peace and Equity Foundation say the box was meant to engage people's conscience, so they would donate school items to help around 15,000 school children in Bicol.

Sharon Bisnar, PEF development associate, says various civic groups have used the festival at great lengths to launch self-help programs and to promote products made by underprivileged communities in the provinces.

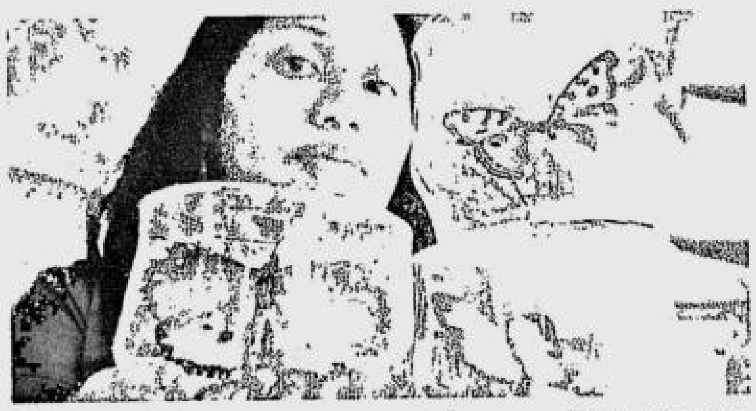
She says the huge media and commercial attention, which the annual event draws, always trickled down to festival participants.

The biofuel float, for example, sustains an advocacy in the summer capital.

Baguio is one of the 10 Asian cities tapped by the United States Sustainable Energy Development Program (SEDP) to promote a "clean cities" program, which includes energy conservation, pollution control and resource management, so the city found the festival useful for promoting this advocacy, according to local officials.

The float combines butterfly and sunflower motifs with binding materials made of coconut shells and sugarcane because these are the resources used to produce biodiesel (coconut methyl ester) and bioethanol.

BAGS made of *abaca* are marketed by Women Entrepreneurs for Development and Advancement from Naga City.



MARINDUQUE entrepreneur converts glass encased butterflies into accessories.

Romeo Gabriel Bagtasos, Baguio chapter president of the Philippine Bartenders League Inc., also realizes that the festival could help his organization raise funds to reimburse their expenses in competing for a national bartending contest.

"We won during the national competition on Feb. 16 but we used borrowed money, so we bought a booth to sell cocktails [in the streets] and P200-DVDs of our bartending team winning the competition," Bagtasos tells the INQUIRER.

At night, the bartenders also perform for the crowd.

Aida Basali, owner of Noreen Ann's Flower Shop Craft, finds the festival a good way of reorienting a small market, which used to benefit overseas Filipino workers based in Hong Kong, to Baguio consumers.

Basali, a domestic helper there, says Filipinos have been selling beaded trinkets on Hong Kong streets and parks during Sundays or during their break time to make ends meet.

"OFWs themselves produce these trinkets. I learned the craft [from shop owners in Hong Kong]. We all learned to make beaded roses [which we sold for 15 Hong Kong dollars each]. But because of the rallies involving Filipino workers seeking bigger pay, authorities there began to crack down on us. We were no longer allowed to sell in the parks," Basali says.

"I just arrived recently from Hong Kong where I worked as a domestic helper. I saw the festival could help me clear my inventory here," she says.

She says various nongovernment organizations, which they have been sending to the festival since 2003, managed to earn enough to sustain their operations.

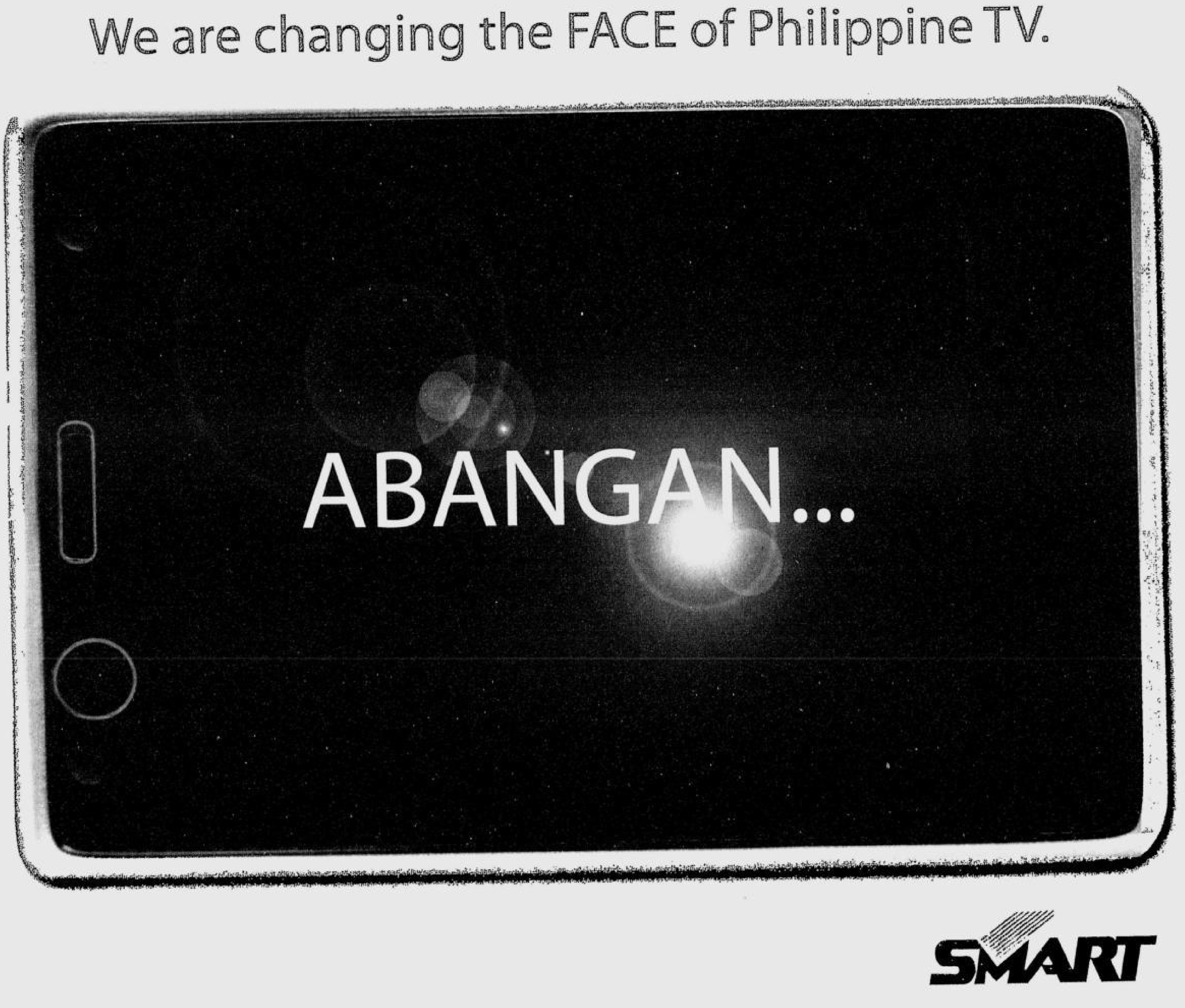
But in this year's staging of the Panagbenga, PEF wanted "a more direct approach," she says.

She says the PEF installed a box to see if people in a festive mood are also in a giving mood. The items they are soliciting from people can be bought from the various *wagwag* (used item) houses in Baguio, "so many people responded," she says.

Some businessmen found their booths a waste of good money, however.

"There were businessmen who wanted to buy the booth from us because they felt it could better serve their products. *Malaki kasi ito* (This is a big booth), but we have been paying the rent of many NGOs that used to sell [their products] at the festival, so the expense was never an issue," she says.

HAND painted T-shirts sells for P300 to P450 at Session Art in "Session Road in Bloom."



Consistency keeps 21-year-old firm at the top

UNITEL Productions was able to form sister companies like Unitel Pictures. Its first solo venture, "Crying Ladies," was topbilled by Sharon Cuneta (shown in photo with Unitel founder and CEO Tony Gloria) and was named Best Picture in the 2003 MMFF awards.

IN HIS LONG MEMORY OF OUTstanding television commercials in the Philippines, marketer Tom Banguis cherishes Magnolia's 60th anniversary in 1984 the most; probably because with such milestone, the client expected nothing less than great for its advertising campaign.

Banguis was at that time in top management and on his way to bigger things outside of the agency handling the all-important Magnolia account.

The commercial was shot and, to Banguis' delight, the footages came out great. But there was a hitch. "They were so excellent they overwhelmed the editors. Putting them together became a problem," Banguis recalls.

The agency saw several edits, but was not happy with the results. Enter Tony Gloria, former head of creatives of the Philippine Advertising Counselors (PAC), at the time one of the biggest agencies in the country.

Gloria had to pitch hard for the company he started, TVC Productions Inc.

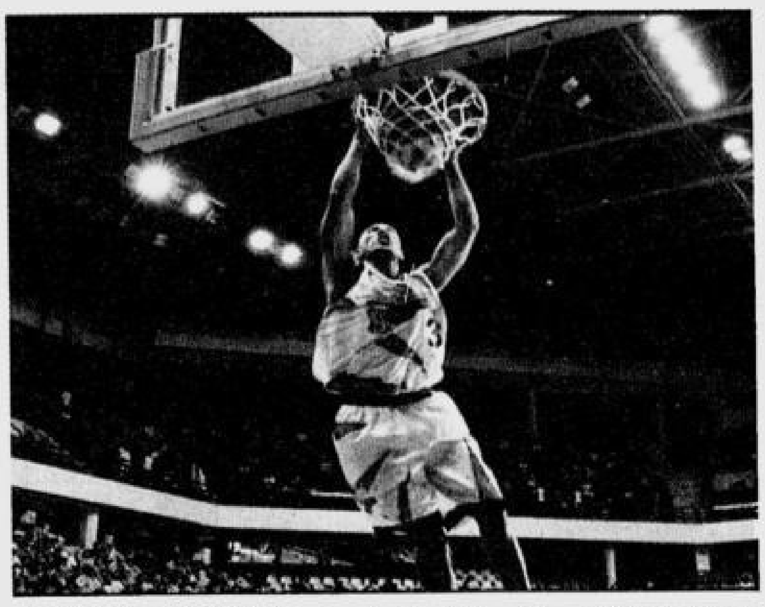
With established commercial production houses salivating over the project, TVC had the thinnest credential to be in the game. But it scored the account through the trust of the creatives led by Jimmy Santiago and gave the fledgling production house its break.

"It was Tony Gloria who pieced the footages together," said Banguis. "Through fresh perspective, excellent craftsmanship and creativity, the commercial came out the way people liked it."

The commercial, 60 Flavorful Years of Magnolia, showing families and friends bonding and enjoying together was launched at the PICC and consequently was awarded Ad of the Year.

After bagging the Magnolia project, Gloria renamed his company Unitel Productions Inc.

And for the past 21 years, Unitel has earned the distinction of being one of the biggest and leading production houses that help create some of the most memorable television commercials. It is a fact that has not escaped award-giving bodies such as the influential Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies (4As).



UNITEL RECOMMENDED shooting San Miguel Corp.'s "Basketball" in film format but combining it with high definition (HD) for the simulated basketball scenes in Araneta Coliseum which required continuous taping as the game progressed.

Winning the Production of the Year Award five times out of nine added one more significant item on Unitel's list of credentials, which had grown so long it has piqued the interest of clients all the way in Southeast Asia.

The outfit is made up of a talented team of directors, editors, visual effects animators and producers who are driven to exceed expectations, time and time again, some of whom have moved up to head the sister companies recently started by Unitel.

But in summing up his company's achievements in the last 21 years, Gloria could think of only one word—consistency.

"You can be good in one year, two years, but it is hard to be good in 10 years, 15, 21. Even if there were ups and downs, we've managed," he says.

Gloria was understating it, Madonna Tarrayo interjected.

Tarrayo, former Unitel executive producer and now general manager of Straight Shooters Inc., a sister company, has worked with Gloria for 14 years and could assert that the production house has gone from strength to strength because it is driven to excel, to innovate, to move and progress constantly.

Unitel has expanded its core value as an expert in moving images to become a one-stop content provider.

As Gloria explains, selling a brand has become defragmented. "Now, in addition to 30-second spot, you have activation events and branded entertainment. We have to provide because the future can be something else."

This was the reason the company expanded five years ago to include Unitel Pictures, whose first excursion was "American Adobo," a co-production with ABS-CBN.

Its first solo production, "Crying Ladies," was named best picture in the 2003 Metro Manila Film Festival. Its latest was "Inang Yaya," which was written and directed by a producer and a director of Unitel.

This drive for value-added service has also compelled the company to be constantly on the prowl for the latest in imaging technology. It is the first and the only production house in the Philippines today using high definition post and shoot, and the first in Southeast Asia to invest in the latest line of Sony HDCAM SR.

Unitel immediately saw the huge potential of digital imaging in terms of faster workflow and cost-saving just as it was emerging, and quickly moved to launch high-definition shoots in the Philippines. It was also the practical thing to do.

For example, the cost of San Miguel Corporation's "Basketball" commercial would have been considerable if it were filmed entirely in 35mm. Unitel recommended shooting in film format but combining it with HD for the simulated basketball scenes in the Araneta Coliseum, which required continuous taping as the game progressed.

And the quality of output? "You wouldn't be able to tell the difference. The quality of the output was indistinguishable from film on television," Gloria attested.

"Tony has a very good vision of either technology or what we need to do as far as creating a dynamic company. He was the one who told me we needed to invest in nonlinear editing technology when he saw it in a demo in Mac World," Jun Reyes, Gloria's partner at Unitel and one of the company's top in-house directors, related.

It is also in the pace and style of the company to develop close relationships with clients. Tony Gloria was emphatic when he expounded on winning the client's trust.

Gloria expounded: "In my experience, additional and unnecessary costs are spent because you don't communicate well. We're not just a production house. We're also consultants, and as consultants we owe it to our clients to explain to them the technical details of a project, especially the new technologies."

He said discussing technical terms with a client can be a long process but this is imperative because he considers playing it safe and second-guessing the enemies of production.

Tony Gloria believes it is the brand that must stand out in any commercial. He maintained that the awards "are just the bonus."

The main course is the selling of the brand. And whatever it will take to sell a product through moving images Unitel will do.

MTV comes out with new owners

NEW OWNERS AND NEW PARTners equal new opportunities. Viacom calls this a new and exciting phase for MTV. With the shift in global direction to further strengthen and support local partners, the independent MTV Philippines is positioned to create new entertainment with true Pinoy flavor for the youth market.

New Viacom's mandate was to dissolve all MTV Asia joint ventures across the region in favor of straight out licensing.

All Youth Channels Inc., got the license to air and and operate the MTV channel in the Philippines. This completely Filipino-managed MTV channel under the All Youth aims to bring more localization to complement the programming that has propelled MTV as the world's largest television network and leading multimedia brand for the youth.

Although ownership of MTV Philippines has changed on paper, the transition that took place on air last Jan. 1, 2007, is an indication that it is business as usual for MTV.

That is exactly what Francis D. Lumen, chair & CEO of MTV Philippines under the All Youth Channels Inc. group, planned and hoped for.

Apart from managing the MTV business and brand locally, All Youth will be focused on developing and aggregating entertainment related content for media companies, wireless carriers and more.

The MTV Philippines Channel, Nickelodeon blocks on cable and ABC 5 with the Nickelodeon and VH1 channels franchise on the horizon marks the beginning for this enterprise's vision of becoming a leader in the content provider industry.

Steven Tan, OIC president of MTV Networks Asia Pacific, is pleased about the continuity of the business and presence of the MTV brand in the Philippines. He further stressed that MTV Philippines under All Youth will continue to enjoy the support of MTV Networks International.

For its part, NBC is very proud of the role it has significantly played in being the first Filipino joint venture partner of the biggest and most recognizable multimedia youth brand in the world.

"MTV Philippines was NBC's baby for eight years." Sandy Ocampo, who returns as MTV's director for sales under All Youth Channels Inc. explained. "It's satisfying for executives like me, who nurtured the MTV brand under NBC's guidance, to see that out mother company is confident that we are ready to take this next step on our own."

For this opportunity, he said, they will always be grateful to NBC.

Apart form continuing the legacy of over 25 years of Music Television, the local market can expect more of the MTV Philippines localized twist on engaging the passions and interest of the youth on-air, on-ground, online.

Training principals to become efficient 'managers'

THE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF AN educational institution is vital since it serves as a setting where young minds are reared and where talents are nurtured. "Education for All"—Unesco's rallying cry for the education sector—is being implemented in the Philippines through the Department of Education. Because of this, teachers undergo training and seminars to keep them updated with the latest in their field. Not only that, the school management—principals, supervisors, consultants, etc.—likewise need to evolve and be receptive to the latest concepts and strategies in terms of managing their learning institution.

The Meralco Management and Leadership Development Center (MMLDC)—a training center and education foundation accredited by the Philippine Council for NGO Certification—offers a "School-based Management Development Program (SBMDP)" that targets school heads and education managers aimed at making them effectively addresses their needs and concerns.

"This program offers specialized training for education managers that aims to stimulate and sustain their desire to continuously improve their schools," said Vivien Arnobit, director of MMLDC's academic services. The program, she added, intends to "equip beneficiaries with skills to effectively prepare, implement and evaluate their School Improvement Plans (SIP)."

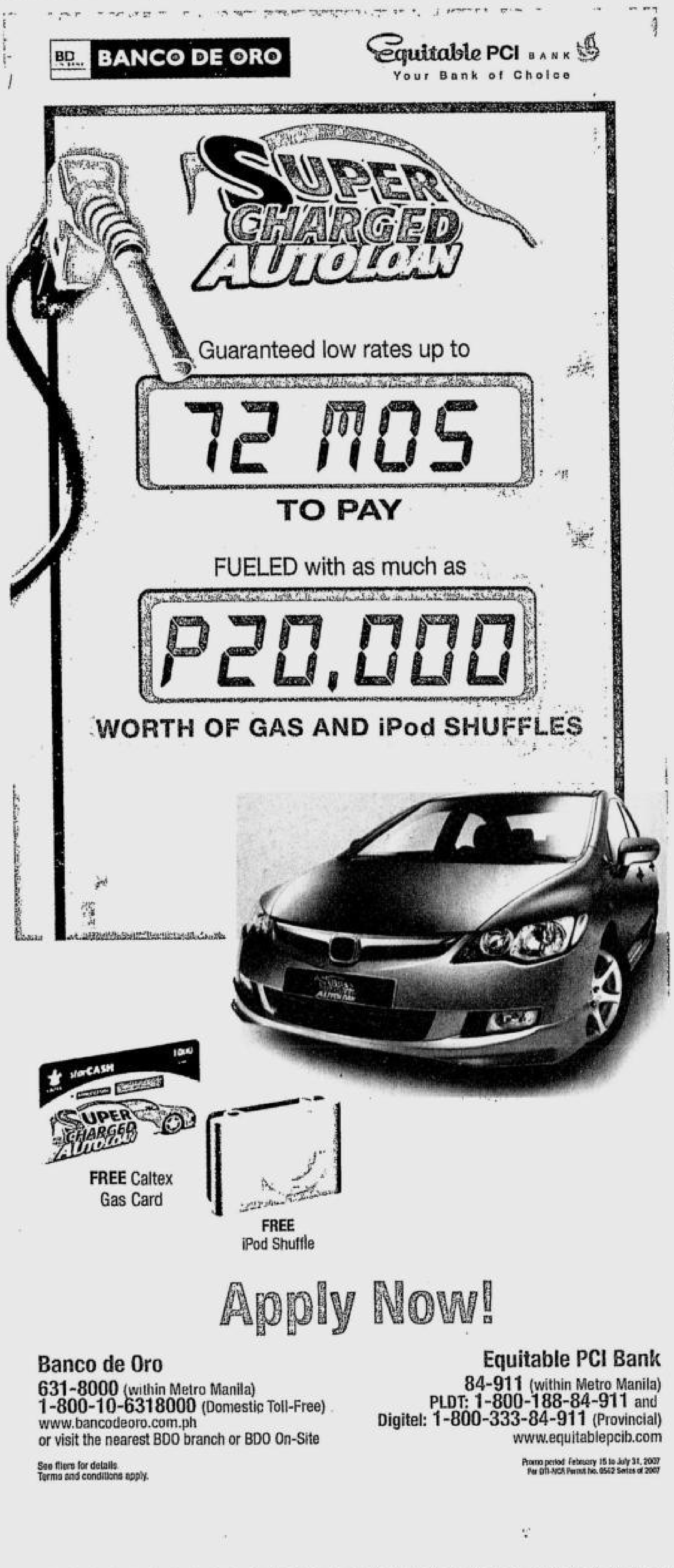
In 2006, around 130 principals and teachers from 65 schools in Cavite were given training intervention by the MMLDC through the SBMDP. There were also training provided for teachers in partnership with Centex Foundation (around 94 teachers from Centex schools).

"The beneficiaries are the school head and the school itself. The participants have continuously reported countless benefits derived from the training program," said Vivien. She cited the Division of Antipolo (with all its 56 schools)—the first set of beneficiaries of MMLDC in the education sector—as one of the most successful batch.

The immediate effect of the program is actually manifested, first and foremost, with the improvement in the perspective and behavior of participants. "Principals and school heads were now aware how they can become better managers. At the same time, they gained enough inspiration to move their schools from good to great." stressed Vivien.

For this year, MMLDC plans to offer the SBMDP to the rest of the schools of the Division of Cavite. The foundation also plans to relaunch an improved Lakbay Kalikasan for students and conduct a Youth Camp that will focus on social responsibility.

For more information, visit the website at www.mmldc.net or call 632-8111 or e-mail: mmldc.marketing@meralco.com.ph. MMLDC is located at Km. 26, Sumulong Highway, Antipolo City.



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0562 Series of 2007

RP JEWELRY INDUSTRY

Firms call on gov't to add sparkle to sector

By Amy R. Remo

"JEWELRY IS NOT MERE LUXURY."

Thus says Mia S. Faustmann, president of the Guild of Philippine Jewellers Inc. during the recent Good News Kapihan Forum held at Figaro in Greenbelt 3.

"More than just to adorn yourself, jewelry is an essential alternative investment as it appreciates over time," explains Faustmann. "Fine jewelry makes use of metals that have intrinsic value such as gold, silver and palladium and that which can be traded as a commodity."

Faustmann adds that the Philippines is lucky enough to have such abundant natural resources at its disposal, which spurred the growth of the local jewelry industry.

Sunrise industry

But this "sunrise" industry is thriving by serving more of the foreign markets than its hometown.

Last year, exporters of jewelry amassed sales of around $40 million in fine jewelry and $80 million for costume jewelry.

Locally, however, jewelers have sold only about P3 billion worth of fine jewelry.

"But this P3-billion figure represents the revenues of only about 1 percent of the local jewelers," says Faustmann. "Revenues of the remaining 99 percent of the country's jewelers remain 'unreceipted' as they mostly belong to the underground industry."

The underground jewelry industry is comprised of those who sell to their "*kumares*" and officemates, at a much lower price than the local jewelry brands.

Underground

In a nutshell, foreign markets are being served by the country's big jewelry exporters while the domestic market is being served mainly by the underground industry.

ARAGON

FAUSTMANN: "Jewelry is an investment."

"We have a lot to be proud of with our jewelry industry, but we just have to encourage the local jewelers from the underground industry to go above the ground," says Faustmann.

She adds that there are big markets that await Filipino jewelers such as UK and Spain, and the rest of the European markets.

Key players

According to Benjamin M. Aragon, of Sanara Inc., makers of fine sterling silver jewelry, the country's jewelry industry should be one of the key players in the export sector since the country has certain advantages.

First, the Philippines has abundant natural resources at its disposal; and second, it has skilled workers, whose talents in designing are at par with the rest of the world.

Europe, for instance, has long admired our pieces.

"There is a huge opportunity awaiting the country's jewelry industry, a whole big market out there. But we have to help each other to move forward," adds Faustmann.

She explains that the sad thing about the existing jewelry industry is that first, most jewelers are from the underground economy, and second, the jewelry we export is not available locally.

According to Faustmann, one incentive that the government provides to underground jewelers is the passage of the Jewelry Act.

Republic Act 8502, otherwise known as the Jewelry Industry Development Act of 1998, features tax and duty relief to jewelry manufacturing including importation of gemstones and raw materials components and equipment.

"To reduce the number of growing underground jewelers, the government also needs to do something about VAT as this eats much of the jeweler's working capital," explains Faustmann. "Setting up an export zone for jewelry exporters would be a big help as well."

By going above ground, Faustmann says that the standardization of domestic products, particularly jewelry, is important as this does not only make the jewelry industry more credible, but also gives it a firmer foundation.

As for the underground jewelers, quality and standard can sometimes be compromised if there's no standard to follow.

Government efforts

Meanwhile, the Department of Trade and Industry, through its export arm, Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, aims to further strengthen fine jewelry sector through projects and participation in various competitions and exhibitions.

"The country's strength is in its workers' creativity—their ability to come up with unique designs at par with the world's best designers," says Trisha Libongco of Citem.

In its pursuit to expand the market for Philippine fine jewelry in Asia, Citem, together with six local jewelers, will fly to Hong Kong on March to showcase the finest Philippine pieces at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center.

As the Philippine jewelry industry is very young, most of the companies are actually small- and medium-sized enterprises.

This sector primarily manufactures, produces and sells jewelry made of precious metals or base metals clad with pearls, precious and semi-precious stones.

"There is a need to jumpstart fine jewelry sector since the Philippines clearly has an edge," says Libongco. "Let's support the local jewelers to propel the growth of this industry."

Support Pinoy

The Philippine jewelry industry needs much support, not only from the government but also from the Filipino consumers.

For instance, young entrepreneur Happy David, owner of the Get Happy line of costume jewelry, admits that she had initial difficulties in selling her pieces in the local market.

David started creating costume jewelry pieces as hobby in 1992.

She says she didn't plan to be in this business until seven years later, when she discovered a way to create unique pieces but still be able to sell them for a competitive price amid the influx of cheaper costume jewelry from China and Taiwan.

But the biggest challenge however, is selling the pieces locally.

"I think a lot of people are starting to appreciate costume jewelry but it's not available locally. Back then, some mall owners do not appreciate new brands and upcoming costume jewelers," says David.

According to her, it was the fashion magazines that helped her in terms of exposure as most of them championed accessories and costume jewelry, stating that it's one of the better alternatives to upgrading otherwise plain clothes.

To date, however, a change in mentality is taking place.

The upcoming Greenbelt 5, for instance, will host stores of top Filipino jewelry exporters, such as Avatar, Arnel Papa, Joyce Orena, among its roster of foreign stores.

The success of the jewelry industry thus lies mainly on two things: first, support from the Filipino consumer and second, support from the government through laws that will help a local jeweler thrive in both local and foreign markets.

"The Filipino consumer must first be educated. Appreciation of jewelry comes from educating people about its intrinsic value and how it can be a form of investment," explains Faustmann.

Next, says Faustmann, we have to get over imported materials. "We have to change this mentality and give a chance to local jewelers, especially the newcomers."

"Patronize local brands as Filipino-made jewelry are at par with any kind of jewelry elsewhere in the world," adds Aragon. "Our industry exports to other countries in Asia, the US and Europe—places where our jewelry are highly regarded."

DAVID: "Support Pinoy!"

PHOTOS BY TAMMY DAVID

Pinoy young blood shines in Shanghai

CAUGHT ON THE ROAD AT NOON, Ros Juan and company decide to stop at a restaurant. Eager to test her newly acquired knowledge of the Mandarin language, the young Figaro area manager for Shanghai volunteers to ask the Chinese driver to join them at the table for lunch. They have a hearty laugh as she realizes she just told the driver the rough equivalent of "you eat me."

Not as new to Figaro, Ros ably handles corporate communications for the Philippines from China. So she starts chatting with Manila at 6:30 in the morning. By 10, she's at Figaro and stays till closing whenever she has to attend to important matters or a visiting tour group.

Otherwise, she dines out with her various groups, which she's quick to describe as "getting a feel of the market." One night it's with her group of different nationalities; another night, her Shanghainese friends; still another, her Mandarin school friends; and then, what she refers to as the Pinoy mafia—a group of Filipino bigwigs and their VIP visitors she says she couldn't have hang with in Manila. This owl's day ends at one or two in the morning.

According to Ros, the two Figaros have become de facto secretariats. People ask store personnel whether so-and-so is in town, and regulars let them know when they're going to be away for a while. If you ever find yourself in Shanghai, head for the flagship store in Jin Lin Tiandi across Xintiandi, 160 Xingye Lu [Road] or the kiosk in Tian An Centre, an office building along Nanjing Xi Lu. Locals and expats alike tote their laptops with them. Here, wireless is everywhere. Micro-organizers, designers and writers meet with clients and friends. Most are recent university graduates in their 20s and 30s, who are exposed to the coffee culture.

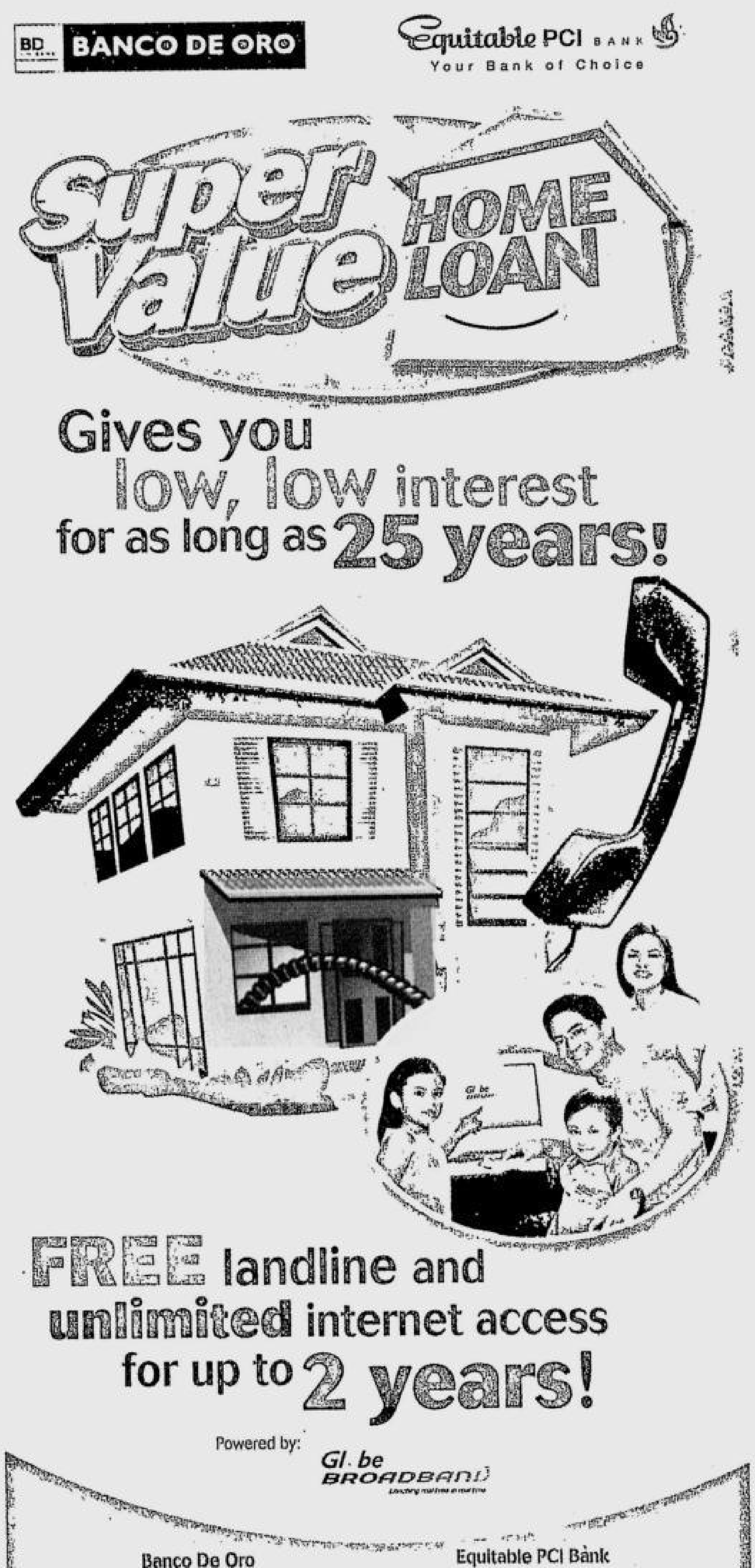
ROS Juan

Not everyone who walks into Figaro is as coffee savvy though. So illustrations showing just what and how much goes into each order of beverage are posted at the stores. Unafraid to try new things, the locals are getting into the groove of coffee. Of course, it's the in thing.

In a tea-drinking country that opened its doors to the rest of the world fairly recently, residents are proud to be conversant in English and in the ways of the West. It's not unusual to see locals order lattés and cappuccinos then sit by Figaro's glass façade intermittently stirring in more sugar into their coffee, reading the news in a language they're trying to learn while they sip a beverage they're trying to get used to. But Ros is sure that China will develop a coffee habit. "Of all the cities in China", she says, "the fastest developing and one that adapts the easiest is Shanghai. Shanghainese are the most cosmopolitan so they're the trendsetters. They easily adapt to what's happening in the West and it's something that they really look up to. After they adapt to it then the other cities follow suit."

Eager to share more with the clientele, Ros organizes in-store events. Last Jan. 19, there was a talk on designing Indian jewelry. Still ongoing is a 12-session creative writing workshop Monday nights that started Jan. 8. Every first Sunday of the month is book club a la Oprah day, when those who have read the designated book come together to share their views on it. Every third Saturday is book club exchange day; an innovation where members put books on the table and take home whichever ones they currently fancy. They can either keep the book or bring it back to next month's exchange. The second floor used to have a whole wall of fake books because of the difficulty in bringing printed material into China. Today, many of the shelves hold real books; books that have collected largely because of the book exchange club and expats who don't want to lug around books they've read to their next home.

Ros has the energy, excitement and enthusiasm that only one so young can have. Being based in Shanghai doesn't bother her at all as she likes traveling, other cultures and languages. That she can effectively eavesdrop now is proof of her growing command of Mandarin. They joke that this feisty lady was just 16 going on 24 when she first joined Figaro Coffee Company; now, she's 24 going on 16. For someone her age, Ros is truly accomplishing a lot. She's probably one of the reasons why Figaro attracts all those young achievers.



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BUSINESS*Monday*

Working to stay on top of the credit card game

JOUBERT

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

HIS NAME SOUNDS FRENCH but he's an Englishman. He grew up when there was apartheid in South Africa. He is a math major. He loves to play golf, but admits his wife is a better player. And just after a few weeks in Manila he is loving it and looking forward to staying in the country for three to five years.

Meet Bob Joubert, the new country manager of Visa Philippines, tasked to further expand the credit card firm's market in the country and cement what it claims to be its number one position.

Although branding wise, MasterCard may be ahead because of its distinct "Priceless" campaign that has lasted for nearly a decade, Joubert says the real indicator is sales volume—the total value of the transactions made using the credit card.

And he says that on this basis, Visa corners 51 percent of the Philippine market.

Last year, Visa says its total card sales volume, which includes ATM withdrawals and cash advances, totaled P103.9 billion, 25.9 percent higher than 2005. Retail sales in shops and point-of-sale terminals in 2006 reached P43 billion, 21 percent higher than 2005.

BusinessMonday recently met with Joubert to talk about him and the credit card business in the country.

He says his ancestors emigrated to South Africa in 1688. His dad was a member of the Royal Air Force and his mom, who's now 95 years old, was a nurse. They met, got separated, met again in Egypt and finally got married and lived for a while in Australia.

Asked about apartheid (political system that prevailed in South Africa from 1948 to the 1990s where the black were discriminated against and certain privileges were given only to people of European origin), Joubert says "it was less difficult than what most might have imagined."

"The elite and the masses were the same but based on color lines," was how he described it.

When he was manager of Barclays Bank in 1981, his secretary was black. Her husband, also black, worked in the bank and there was no problem in the office environment.

"Barclays was a well integrated firm," he comments.

But Joubert and his wife eventually opted to raise their two daughters in Australia. One daughter is a lawyer in Melbourne and the other lives in London.

After a series of bank posts in Australia, he joined Visa some six years ago.

His main goal in the Philippines is to "advance the Visa business." Although Visa is more closely associated with a credit card, it defines itself more as a payments provider.

"We provide consumers and merchants a convenient way of paying," Joubert says.

Over the last 18 months, Jourbert says, "we have achieved a major position in terms of market share and position, There are sound and good prospects ahead."

Visa is exploring partnerships with smaller banks and will continue its financial literacy program, which involves seminars that talk on savings and investments and proper use of credit cards.

It also wants to pursue the debit card business for the Philippines because Joubert says that under this, "cardholders are under no risk of getting into debt" because you use money that you have; unlike a credit card where you can make a purchase without the money to pay for it.

Credit card companies make money from fees they charge banks to facilitate the transactions. Only banks issue credit cards and collection of payments are also done via the banking system.

On credit card fraud, Joubert says that while the impression is that the fraudulent activities are on the rise, these are actually on the decline by "a couple of basis points or a fraction of one percent."

He mentions the two most common credit card frauds are "skimming" and photographing of the PIN entry. Skimming means extracting the information on the magnetic strip (black strip at the back of every card) using a special device. The photographing of the PIN is rare in the Philippines and is more prevalent in developed countries.

Joubert points out that card companies have already created systems that monitor unusual credit card activities of the cardholder—such as transactions happening in various countries at almost the same time and frequent use in a span of a few hours. This prompts the card firm to contact the cardholder.

MOVEMENTS

GSK has new country head

GLAXOSMITHKLINE (GSK) Asia Pacific senior vice president and regional director Venkatraman Thyagarajan announced the appointment of Rick T. Gain as the new president and managing director for its Philippine operation. GSK is the biggest research-based multinational healthcare and pharmaceutical company in the country, a market leader in the areas of anti-infectives, respiratory and vaccines. With its introduction of breakthrough medicines for asthma, diabetes, hepatitis B, and hypertension, the company has a significant presence in the pharmaceuticals market.

Prior to his Philippine assignment, Gain was managing director for Thailand/Myanmar for GlaxoSmithKline (Limited) and has been with the company since 1990, having held various executive positions with GSK Australia and New Zealand, respectively.

Gain is also keen on sponsoring entrepreneurship in a working environment where employees feel a sense of ownership in the business.

A New Zealander, Gain is married with three children.

David Verklin to head Media Lions jury

LONDON—David Verklin, chief executive officer of Carat Americas and chair of Carat Asia Pacific has been appointed Media Lions Jury president, the organizers of the 54th Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival announced today.

Based in New York, David Verklin joined Carat in 1998 as CEO of Carat Americas and in 2005 was also appointed chair of Carat Asia Pacific. In his role, David oversees the operations of Carat in the United States, Latin America, Canada and Asia Pacific as well as on the Indian sub-continent. He also sits on the board of directors for Aegis Group plc (Carat's holding company).

Under David's leadership, Carat Americas has grown into one of the world's leading media-centric diversified marketing services companies as well as the fastest growing within the industry with media billings approaching $8 billion annually. Carat Americas companies have over 300 clients.

David is one of the most frequently quoted experts in the media services industry and currently sits on the board of the American Advertising Federation, the Ad Council, the Audit Bureau of Circulations and the Virginia Commonwealth University's AdCenter as well as the New York Multiple Sclerosis Society.

David began his career at Young & Rubicam, New York. He helped create Hal Riney & Partners in San Francisco, first serving as its media director and later managing the entire agency as its managing director. Under his leadership Hal Riney grew into one of the largest privately held advertising agencies in the United States. David is a graduate of the University of Virginia. He lives with his wife and their three children in Connecticut.

Launched in 1999, Media Lions honors the best in media strategy, planning and execution. The 54th International Advertising Festival will be held 17-23 June 2007 in Cannes, France.

Grey global group has new chair

NEW YORK, NY—Grey Global Group, a WPP company and the parent company of Grey Worldwide and G2, announced that James R. Heekin III assumed the position of chair and chief executive officer on Jan. 1, 2007 as Grey begins its 90th year. He succeeds Edward H. Meyer who retired in December, culminating a storied 50-year career at Grey, including more than three decades as CEO.

Grey Global Group ranks among the world's top marketing organizations, serves one-fifth of the Fortune 500, and operates 110 offices in 88 countries with 10,000 employees. Its multidisciplinary offer focuses on operating companies such as Grey Worldwide, G2, WINGLATINO and Alliance and includes sister companies such as Grey Healthcare Group, GCI Group and MediaCom.

Martin Sorrell, CEO of WPP, said, "Jim Heekin will be focusing on raising Grey's creative standards even further with the help of Tim Mellors and on its integrated offer, particularly in the area of Internet, Interactive and digital with Joe Celia. Through WPP, Jim and Joe will further enhance Grey Global's capabilities and resources, not only in the mature markets of the US and Western Europe, but in the faster-growing markets of Asia Pacific, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East and Central and Eastern Europe."

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WTC Main Hall	10:30 AM - 12:30 PM 1st AMBIANTE CAKE DISPLAY DECORATING COMPETITION An on-the-spot cake decorating contest using Ambiante non-dairy whipping cream Hosted by: PURATOS PHILS., INC. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM US TRENDS Presentor(s): American Institute of Baking Hosted by: U.S. WHEAT ASSOCIATES 3:30 PM - 6:00 PM UNDERSTANDING HEALTHY BAKING Presentor(s): Ms. Jade Ng, Nutritionist, Goodman Fielder Australia Hosted by: GOODMAN FIELDER INT'L. PHILS. INC.	10:00 AM - 12:00 NN ENZYMES IN THE HEALTHY BREAD AREA Presentor(s): Beate Kornbrust, Dept. Manager, Novozymes Switzerland AG Hosted by: NOVOZYMES/WILLS INT'L. SALES CORP. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM FASHION & BAKING IN THE PHILS. Presentor(s): Severo "Bong" Bonanza, Jr. Demonstrator: Arvin Sala Guest Master Baker: Mr. Reginald Reardon, Director, Research & Dev't. Manildra Flour Mills, Australia Hosted by: MANILDRA FLOUR MILLS 3:30 PM - 6:00 PM FINE PATISSERIE FEATURING AMBIANTE & PATISFRANCE RANGE Presentor(s): Honghui Seng, Guest Demonstrator, Puratos China Hosted by: PURATOS PHILS., INC.	10:00 AM - 12:00 NN HOW TO MAKE AN ARTISTIC BREAD DISPLAY Presentor(s): Chef Phil Afable, Pastry Chef Water Front Hotel,Davao; Chef King Fonacier, Reseda Inc. Hosted by: UNIVERSAL ROBINA CORP. Flour Division 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM SEMINAR W/ TAIWAN-CHINA BAKING SCHOOL Presentor: Professor Chou Seminar on Chinese Roasting (Roast Duck, Chicken feet, and Pork Asado) (With Interpreter) 3:30 PM - 6:00 PM SEMINAR W/ TAIWAN-CHINA BAKING SCHOOL Presentor: Professor Chou Seminar on Rice Flour Products (Tikoy, Yam Cake, Fried Sweet Potato Buchi, Radish Cake) (With Intepreter)
Seminar Room 1 Lobby	10:30 AM - 12:30 PM BAKERY PRODUCT INNOVATIONS WITH PEA WHEAT FLOUR BLENDS Presentor(s): Wilburt Wong Hosted by: U.S. DRIED PEA & LENTIL COUNCIL 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM TRENDS IN HEALTHY BAKING Presentor(s): Nicanor P. Ines, Quality Assurance Manager Hosted by: UNIVERSAL ROBINA CORP. Flour Division	10:00 AM - 12:00 NN SEMINAR ON FLOUR FORTIFICATION PROGRAM Presentor(s): Hector Maglalang, Food Fortification Consultant Hosted by: A2Z PROJECT/PHILIPPINES 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES WITH NESTLE FOOD SERVICE Presentor(s): Mr. Caloy Bacani, Business Executive; Mr. Jon Antonio, Business Executive; Mr. J. Jovanny Caminade, AVP, Channel Bus. Grp. Head Food Services Dept. Hosted by: NESTLE PHILS., INC. 3:30 PM - 6:00 PM LATEST TRENDS ON CAKES & DESSERTS Presentor(s): Ms. Janine Small, Bakery Technical Advisor, New Zealand Bakels LTD. Hosted by: BAKELS PHILS. INC	10:00 AM - 12:00 NN OVERVIEW ON PREMIX TECHNOLOGY Presentor(s): Rosario "Chalo" Manresa, Vice-President of PSB Hosted by: PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF BAKING 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM WHAT'S NEW FERNA - New Products from FERNA, The Food Ingredients Specialist Hosted by: FERNA CORP. 3:30 PM - 6:00 PM FOOD SAFETY & HYGIENE AWARENESS Presentor(s): Mr. Ranz Umali Hosted by: NCH PHILS.
Seminar Room 2 Lobby	INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF CHINESE BAKERY AND CONFECTIONERY ASSOCIATION (IFCBCA) Induction	1:00 PM - 3:00 PM BAKERY MANAGEMENT Presentor(s): Mr. Tim Sietoff, Baking Instructor, American Institute of Baking Hosted by: U.S. WHEAT ASSOCIATES	1:00 PM - 3:00 PM FOOD SAFETY Presentor(s): Mr. Al St. Cyr, Head Food Safety Education, American Institute of Baking Hosted by: U.S. WHEAT ASSOCIATES

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IN THIS ISSUE
- **Encore for 'Virtuoso** Strings' on March 9 /D3
- **John Paul II drama** on CineVita /D4

MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ⊙ TUESDAY **FITNESS** ⊙ WEDN OOD ⊙ FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

'Basilia ng Malolos': Kudos to a new 'sarswela'

JENNY Jamora as Basilia Tantoco

Nicanor Tiongson's powerful play on Basilia Tantoco and the women of Malolos is for keeps. It is on extended run this week at the Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero Theater

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

THE STORY OF "BASILIA NG Malolos" is a poignant story of women's struggle for liberation. "Basilia" is the collective embodiment of the "Women of Malolos" to whom Dr. José P. Rizal wrote a letter in 1889, extolling the women, numbering 20 in all, for their bold act of petitioning the colonial government through then Gov. Gen. Valeriano Weyler to open a night school devoted to the teaching of the Spanish language. The friars then abhorred the idea of letting the natives learn the Spanish language, as it would

BASILIA/ C3

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VISUAL ARTS

"HALF-MOON Bay"

Isidro at Yellow Door

Raul Isidro's "Landscapes" will open at Yellow Door Gallery (North Court, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell) March 5 and run until March 14. The exhibit shows Isidro's potent abstract landscapes in sharp colors and intricate figures. Call 0920-9624347.

Tortorici at MET

"BENEATH the Rainbow Sea"

The Metropolitan Museum of Manila will open "The Art of the Tai-Chi: Brushstrokes in Meditation," featuring works by American artist Anita R. Tortorici, March 9, 6:30 p.m., at the museum's First Floor Gallery. The exhibit is for the benefit of the Children's Outreach Program of the museum. Call 5211517.

Padilla at Le Soufflé

ESQUINITA in Spanish means a street or the corner of a room. An exhibit by Vincent Padilla bearing that title explores and embraces the unconventional lessons, values and ideals that one can discover from living in such a space. Showing until March 31 at Le Soufflé (Amorsolo Tower, Amorsolo Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati), "Eskinitas" is a display of oil and acrylic works. Padilla draws his inspiration from both his personal experiences and current episodes happening in the *eskinitas*, particularly the small streets of Hulo in Mandaluyong, where he used to live.

"PAUWI II"

Chalk arts fest at UST

The University of Santo Tomas will hold the 2007 Thomasian Chalkfest on March 9, 8 a.m.-8 p.m., at the UST Arch of the Centuries, Miguel de Benavides Park, UST campus, Manila. Theme of the contest is "Silip sa Mundo." All schools are invited to join the chalk-art competition. Call the UST Public and Alumni Affairs Office, 4061611 loc. 8315.

Villamarin at Silverlens Gallery

Silverlens Gallery (2320 Pasong Tamo Extension, Warehouse 2, Yupangco Building) presents an exhibit of photo collages, "Home is Where the Heart Is," by JJ-Christine Villamarin, until March 23. Traveler, performer, cinematographer, director and photographer Villamarin creates an exhibit bursting with color and humor unseen in usual travel photographs. Call 8160044 or e-mail manage@silverlensphoto.com.

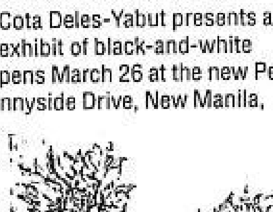
"THE WEDDING," by Carlos Francisco II

'Yakap' at Kaida

Kaida Art Gallery (2/F, GFO Building, 122 Kamuning Rd., QC) presents a group exhibit, "Yakap," until March 14. Some 40 noted artists showcase their works—from painting to sculpture to new media. Call 4144777 or 0916-6821755.

Deles-Yabut at Peta

Cota Deles-Yabut presents an exhibit of black-and-white drawings, which opens March 26 at the new Peta Theater Center, Sunnyside Drive, New Manila, QC. The exhibit runs until April 11. Call 7256244 or 4100822.



"SUNFLOWERS"

Infante, Sena in Libis

Pastel masters Ben Infante and Fernando Sena hold a joint exhibit showcasing their pastel paintings, until March 8 at 4/F, Cinema Lobby, Citywalk 2, Libis, QC. Infante's paintings show the slow transition of dark into the light areas in an atmospheric rendering of a landscape with human figures, skillfully rendered in rich tones and subtle gradation of tonal value. Sena's works have an immediate appeal to the tactile subjects, contextualized by an amazing sense of lighting. Sena affirms lighting as a compositional cornerstone—one of his distinctive trademarks.

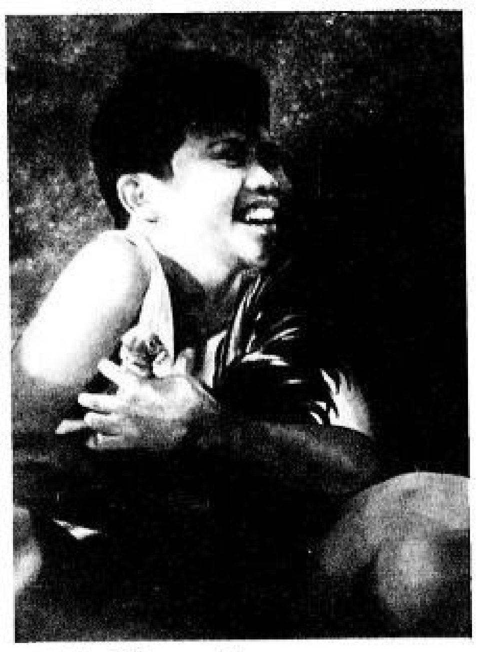
COLLABORATIVE collage by Poklong Anading and MM Yu

Anading, Yu at Mag:net

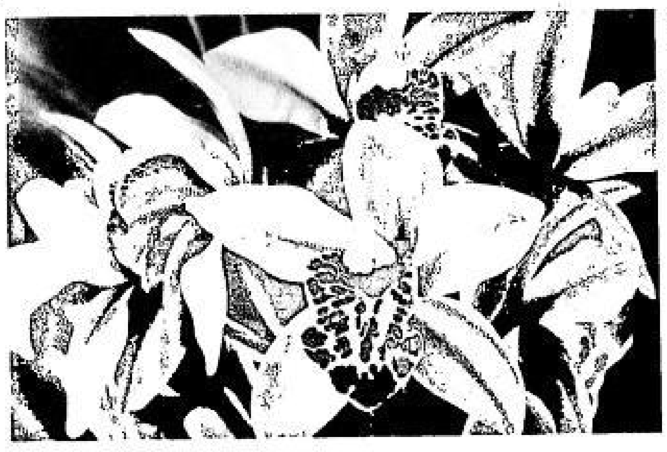
Mag:net Gallery (The Loop, ELJ Center, ABS-CBN Compound, ELJ Drive, QC) presents "Variable Series," an exhibit of collages by MM Yu and Poklong Anading, March 6-31. In their collaboration, the pair cut out various images from two art history books and reconstituted them into a collection of small-scale collages. Call 8177895 or e-mail www.mag-net.com.ph.

Lim at Mag:net-Katipunan

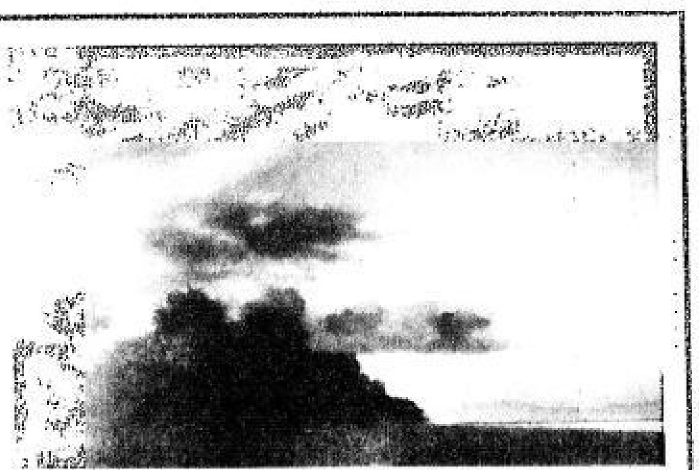
For Women's Month, Mag:net-Katipunan presents "Sometimes It's Just Too Quiet" by Lean Lim. Curated by Roberto Chabet, the show straddles the themes of waiting, stillness and quietness. The artist presents intangible phases of self-reflexivity by taking self-timed and cropped photos of herself in different stages of waiting and sitting on a chair, and faithfully rendering these on 3 x 4-feet paintings. Mag:net is at Agcor Bldg., 335 Katipunan Ave., QC. Call 9293191.



"BOY with Rooster"



"STILL Life"



"LANDSCAPE"

Galura watercolors in three galleries

ALFRED GALURA'S MASTERY OF watercolor takes the spotlight in simultaneous exhibits at Gallery Nine in Megamall, We Gallery at Mall of Asia, and 1/of Gallery in Serendra until March 10.

Featured are serenely majestic sea- and landscapes, still lifes, and figurative renditions keen with chiaroscuro, all parlaying Galura's wide range of powers, which include portraiture. Call 6877302, 5560336 and 9013152.

Acid vision
and psychological terrorism

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE WORLD COULDN'T GET ANY bleaker than this—is the viewer's first reaction upon stumbling into the gallery showing Igan D'Bayan's latest psychological terrorizing of jaded urbanites.

Go and see if you won't stagger over his second solo exhibit, "Long Live the New Flesh," with 25 pieces in mixed media on canvas, until March 11 in the Crucible at the Artwalk, L/4, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

This is imagery that's at once expressionist, surrealist and gothic—looking like a miasmal pageant of Boschean hybrids, Goyaesque coven, Francis Bacon portraiture, Rembrandt lighting, Dantesque torments, and film clips from Guillermo del Toro.

As in his first exhibit, the dark inspiration here is rock and all that acid-tripping, and the subject the artist's psychopathology imbued with social indictment.

The viewer won't immediately grasp the meaning of the image unless the title is read. D'Bayan's imagery, however, is compelling enough to affect the viewer not only at gut level but also mentally.

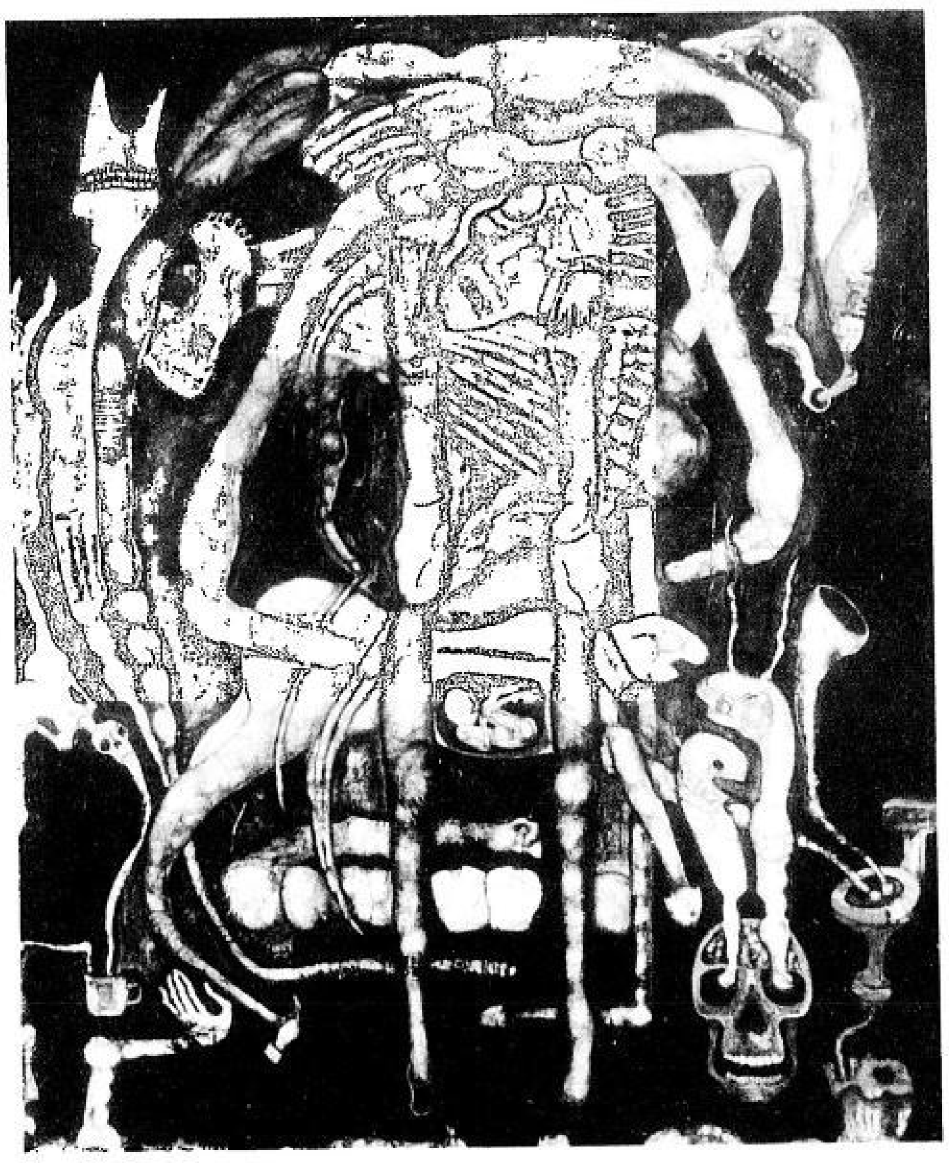
The exhibition note illuminates this darkest vision of humanity: "It is Rembrandt-meets-Resident Evil in this show, which features paintings of masters of war, sexual predators, assorted mutants, as well as characters from children's books and cartoons, which are depicted as mutated wreckage of memory.

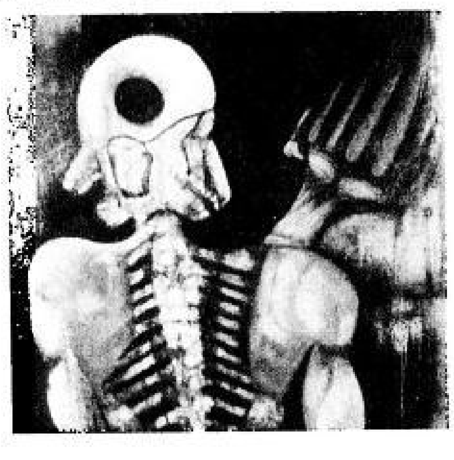
"It is the artist's way of saying everything has become rancid and rotten—even the past, more so the future—in this postmodern world characterized by fear and paranoia."

Hellish torments

The rich warm colorism of D'Bayan's first show is here replaced by muted monochrome, chiefly brown and gray, sometimes accentuated with incandescent blue, acid-yellow, blood-red. Here are his signature skeletal figures in various stages of contortion and mutilation.

Typical are "Hand of Doom" and "Bugged," the kind of diabolic portraiture spawned by the artist's sorrow. They show bones peeking out of muscles like carefully rendered cross sections of the human anatomy in a medical study—but the heads are skulls that resemble insect, goat or dog.

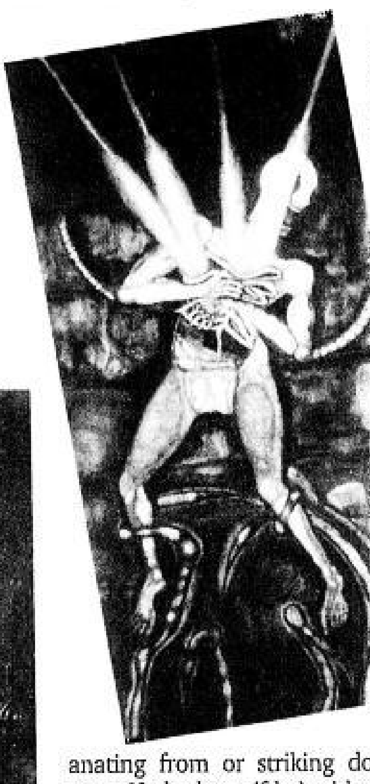




"DISCO Purgatorio" (above) and "Hand of Doom"

The large piece "Pull My Ribs Apart and Let the Sun Out" is ostensibly the artist's self-portrait, but instead of showing the surface he plumbs the depths. Instead of physiognomy identifying the artist, we see his hellish torments, as tentacles tug at his legs, the abdomen is ripped apart, ribs and intestines about to spill out.

Four broad lines of white incandescence radiate from the chest, but by the look of it one can't be sure whether this energy is emanating from or striking down the poor man. He looks as if he's either embracing a clutch of light sabers or repelling gigantic syringes.



"PULL My Ribs Apart and Let the Sun Out"

Blackest humor

Despite the despair, however, humor flashes, albeit black. Typical is "Eroticon" No. 1, which is, of course, far from being erotic.

Here a male human form with insect head on the foreground is covering with his hands his bloodied crotch, presumably gelded, as greenish phalluses are hanging limp in a tub on the ground. A lower body part with a gash for crotch and sprouting an insect head is on the background, presumably the castrating female.

Certainly the centerpiece is "Disco Purgatorio," a tableau of bones and sinews, skull and toilet bowl, disembodied body parts, humans with heads of locusts and a hammer for a foot. One female form is on all fours while a male is taking her from behind, her abdomen vivisected to expose a curling fetus.

"I have such a warped take on aesthetics," admits the artist. "I like things that may be shocking or repulsive to most people. Like the Siamese twins with heads on fire on the cover of Jane's Addiction's 'Nothing Shocking.' Or any of Swiss surrealist H.R. Giger's female subjects in his infernal biomechanical universe. I find them visually appealing. I like the subjects because they are a celebration of form and figuration, juxtaposed with something sick, twisted and deathlike—life, sex and death in one frame."

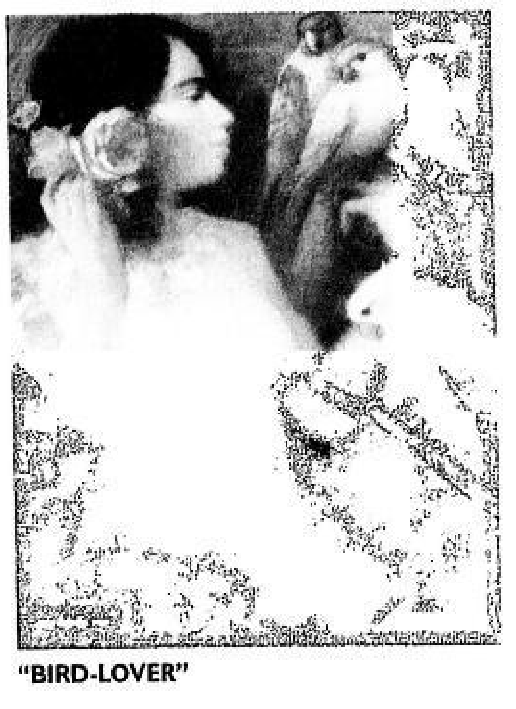
All this fascination with sickness and death reveals what the artist really is: a romantic. What we see here is actually the mask of a demon lover.

New book on pastel artist Bolaños

GREG BOLAÑOS, KNOWN AS THE KING OF Pastel, will mark his 70th birthday with the launching of his first book "Pastel" on March 8 at Bulan Restaurant in Little Baguio, San Juan.

In the book are over 200 recent works of Bolaños as compiled by publisher Marlene Aguilar.

Growing up in the pastoral landscape of Bacon, Sorsogon, Bolaños spared no medium in exploring his fascination for art. When pencil, crayons and paper were scarce, he etched his work on banana leaves or used sticks to draw figures on the sand of the vast seashore.



"BIRD-LOVER"

Later, as a self-supporting student at the UP College of Fine Arts, he worked his way through school as a silkscreen artist for outdoor billboards.

After graduation, he ventured into the advertising industry and worked there for almost 20 years. He linked up with artists on weekends to form the original Saturday Group.

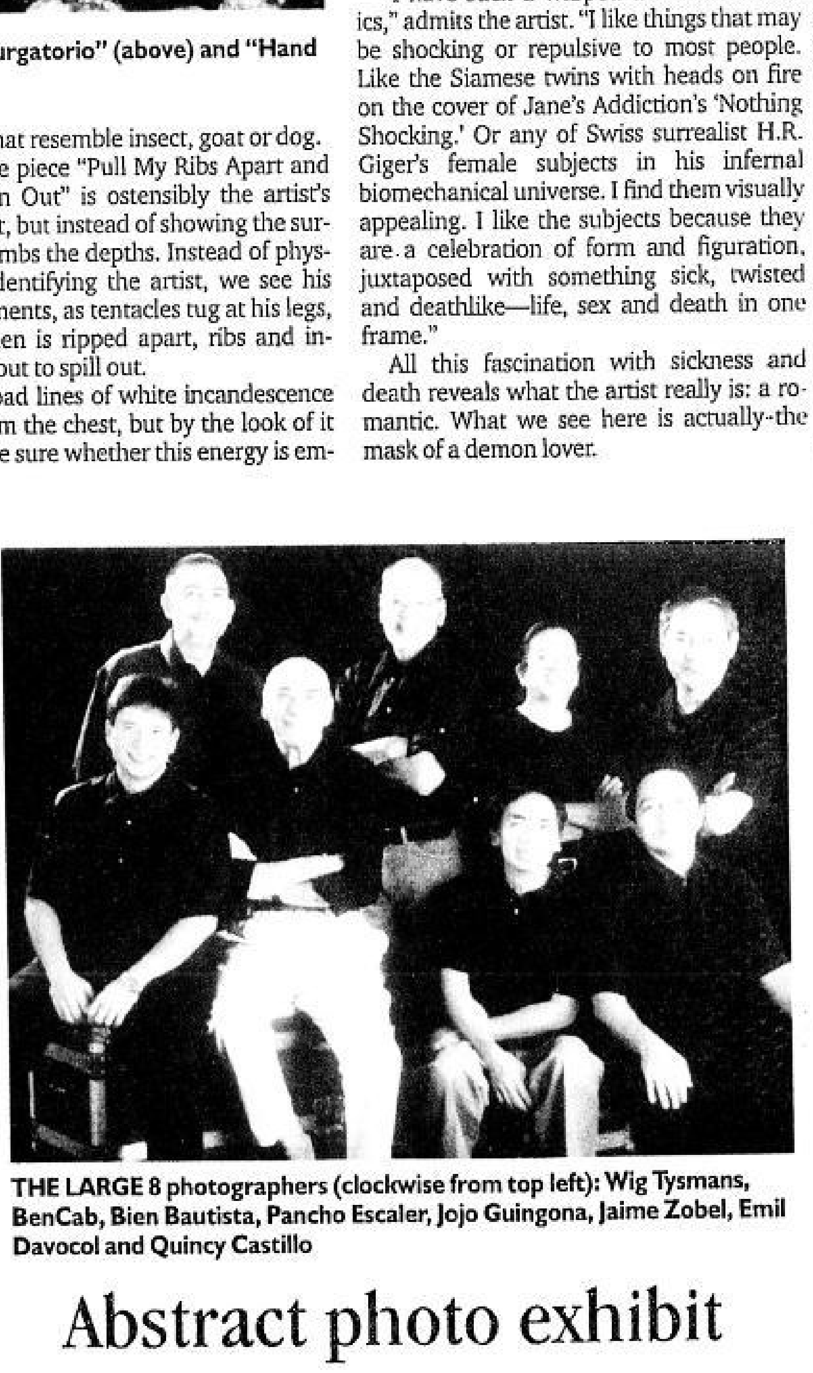
Greg went full-time into painting in the '70s, when patronage for the arts was on the rise. He has not looked back since.

"Viewers are touched by Greg's capture of the innocent and the natural," writes Michael Cassey in his introduction to the artist's book. "His colors, hues and light nuances are effortless and pleasing as they flow and combine, creating not just a painting but a satisfying experience, an experience as satisfying as nature. Such has always been Greg's ultimate goal as an artist, to bring nature to the canvas."

As renowned art critic Dr. Rod. Paras-Perez wrote: "[Bolaños] has the alchemy of vision which can make the most ordinary thing appear special."

Guests of honor in the launch are National Artist Napoleon Abueva, Philippine Tatler magazine editor Chit Lijauco, art patrons Hans Dy Buncio and Alwin Sta. Rosa, and Asian Development Bank executive director Richard Stanley.

"Pastel by Greg Bolaños" is a Philippine Heritage Book. Call Bulan Restaurant (7258496) or Likhang Kulay Gallery (0922-8804668).



THE LARGE 8 photographers (clockwise from top left): Wig Tysmans, BenCab, Bien Bautista, Pancho Escaler, Jojo Guingona, Jaime Zobel, Emil Davocol and Quincy Castillo

Abstract photo exhibit

"LARGE 8: AN EXHIBIT ON Photo-Abstraction," featuring works by artists/photographers Bien Bautista, BenCab, Quincy Castillo, Emil Davocol, Pancho Escaler, Jojo Guingona, Wig Tysmans, and Jaime Zobel, opens March 8 at the SM Mall of Asia, and will run until March 19. The dramatic art photos measure more than 6 x 10 feet, a remarkable scale for Philippine photo exhibits. The exhibit will tour major SM malls around the country until Aug. 14. Call 8442679 or 0917-5266673.

'Basilia ng Malolos': Kudos to a new 'sarswela'

From page C1

bring the native's status to the level of the Spaniards, an absurdity in colonialism. More important, learning the language would enable the Filipinos to learn liberal ideas and foster unity that could challenge colonial rule.

The women had sought to put an end to modesty, which in those times meant submissiveness or subservience to the authorities, especially the friars. The Filipina, disclosed in the national hero's letter, no longer stands with her "head bowed" or "spend her time on her knees," as well as to "blind obedience," by obeying only that which is "reasonable and just."

The laudable act of the Malolos women can be construed as a bold step toward the liberation of women that has gained significant support now in Philippine society. For this reason, Basilia Tantoco and her *barkada* or colleagues deserve to be emulated for advancing the feminist cause for equal recognition with men.

The subject of a book published in 2004, "The Women of Malolos," written by scholar and teacher Nicanor G. Tiongson, the story has been made into a contemporary *sarswela*, with libretto by Tiongson himself, music by Joy Marfil and direction by José Estrella, presented by the UP Playwrights' Theater at the Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero Theater, UP Diliman.

The story is woven around Basilia Tantoco, a spinster who has embraced the struggle for women's liberation, and the motherland's liberation as well.

In petitioning for the opening of a night school, she is portrayed as a relentless fighter against frailocracy. In establishing the Asociacion Feminista Filipina, Club de Mujeres de Malolos and many more, she is also portrayed as staunchly supporting the libertarian struggle of the revolutions against Spain and the US.

These women came from the educated class who used "silver spoons" and fine Chinese crockery. They refused to be appended to their homes, such women aptly called in the Spanish colonial period as *mujer de la casa*, whose task was simply to procreate, attend to the needs of the family, and do homely chores, apart from serving their husbands.

Instead, they sought enlightenment in order to break the chains that bound the people to ignorance.

"Basilia of Malolos" has therefore become a fitting text for a contemporary *sarswela* that destroys the myth of women as weak. To achieve this, Tiongson has infused the text with writings of the period that provide direct contrast to the libertarian thrust of the story. Juxtaposed are backward ideas from the works of the period such as Fr. Modesto Castro's "Ang Pagsusulatan ng Dalawang Binibini na si Urbana at si Feliza," which spelled the canons of urbanity meant to propagate eternal docility so necessary to maintaining the colonial order.

Reference is made, and rightly so, to Rizal's novel, "Noli Me Tangere," whose women characters appear to have no redeeming values at all, appearing more as caricatures than paragons. On the positive side, reference is likewise made to "Malakas at Maganda," an indigenous legend of creation which puts man and woman on equal footing, providing direct contrast to the Western biblical story of creation.

The contrast, indeed, is striking, as it becomes easy for the audience to understand the libertarian idea that is conveyed by the *sarswela*. History, literature, theater and music become proactive as disciplinal walls are torn down to achieve a trans-disciplinal dimension, thus allowing an intimate inter-textual dialogue among them to drive home the theme.

Not traditional

Yet while the *sarswela* harps on a historical theme that has become part and parcel of contemporary life, it departs completely from the traditional genre that is meant to entertain with a music that overpowers the conveyance of the thematic idea. Tiongson has aptly said in his notes that "Basilia" is opposed to the traditional *sarswela*, which is meant to entertain and has an upbeat, happy resolution.

WOMEN of Malolos show their support for the Katipunan-led revolution against Spain.

NATHASIA Garrucha as Alberta Uitangcoy and the alternate Basilia

"Basilia," he says, articulates social as well as political ideas at the turn of the 19th century to dramatize the struggle of the Malolos Women for liberation against both the Spanish friars and the Filipino patriarch. The logic of this assertion eloquently attests to Tiongson's familiarity with this particular genre both as creator and critic. He definitely knows his métier.

The musical scoring follows this consideration, but it is never sacrificed to give prime importance to the conveyance of its political idea. The music, in fact, registers on the same level: It is on equal footing with the text, thus making the *sarswela* truly a fine music-theater where the two disciplines are creatively fused.

The music differs from the traditional *sarswela*. There are no overpowering songs that convey sentimentality or triteness; likewise, there is no overarching instrumentation scored for the accompaniment. Instead the composer uses straightforward music in conveying the nuance of the text in strict prosody that almost sounds like a recitative, except for some rousing choruses or austere yet absorbing airs.

Traditional colonial forms such as the *kundiman*, *danza*, or *marcha* are used to capture the spirit of the period and provide the much-needed local flavor or color. Hence, the inclusion of the music of "Jocelynang Baliwag," Molina's "Alin mang Lahi" (with text by Rizal) and "Alerta Katipunan."

Elegant twist

But there's an elegant twist, an eloquent tour de force achieved through the inclusion of the music of Handel and Beethoven, all done in good taste.

The recitative is infused with a sophisticated Handelian cadence taken from the oratorio "The Messiah" ("Comfort Ye"), used in the chant-like rendition of Marcelo del Pilar's profane "Ang Sampung Utos ng Fraile" (from "Dasalan at Toksohan"), which is a parody of the "Ten Commandments."

Then all of a sudden strains of Beethoven's "Chorale" from the Ninth Symphony, interspersed with rhythmic and melodic finery from the grand "Hallelujah Chorus" by Handel, burst out in the rendition of a mundane chorus, "Espiritu de Lambanog," which hails its power to embolden a person's spirit. Such irreverence and alcoholic adulation become powerful dramatic means of highlighting the *sarswela*'s intent of glorious emancipation.

For how else would one underscore the eminence of the friar's dissipation except through satire or parody? How else would one mock down conventional hypocrisy except through an alcoholic Bacchanalian frenzy?

Estrella's adept direction provides a singleness of focus for such a play of epic proportion, engaging the audience's attention to the hilt, without boring them. Action unfolds clearly, following a convincing logical flow. Choreography by Dexter Santos enlivens action. Greatly felt is the intimate lighting, which together with the austere sets and appropriate costume design and the video, executed by John Ilao Batalla, Ludendorfo Decenteceo, John Abul and Mele Yamomo, respectively, makes the *sarswela* truly a creative collaboration.

The cast is powerful. They all know how to carry a musical line, staying warmly on pitch as they punctuate their lines with the needed color. The voices are quite natural and perhaps did not receive any schooling, except for Nathasia Garrucha, "Tasy," which sounds elegantly placed.

Jenny Jamora plays well the title role, opposite Felix Maglaya, her leading man, a revolutionary, who exemplifies to the hilt male chauvinism. Tiongson uses imaginative extrapolation to highlight the dramatic import of the *sarswela*. This is achieved with this contrived love affair that fails to be solemnized in matrimony when a third party breaks in and fearlessly announces the man to be wedded is her husband.

Likewise, the reference to Benito Galdos' Doña Perfecta, the novel upon which Rizal's "Noli" was based, is fictive. Its inclusion all the more defines the intellectual ambiance pervading Malolos and its women around that time.

In the end, Tiongson introduced the many descendants of the Malolos women who are now prominent persons in their respective professional callings.

The *sarswela* is for keeps, and deserves many repeats! Four more performances are slated for the *sarswela*'s extended run at the same venue on March 8, 10 a.m.; March 9, 7 p.m.; and March 10, 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

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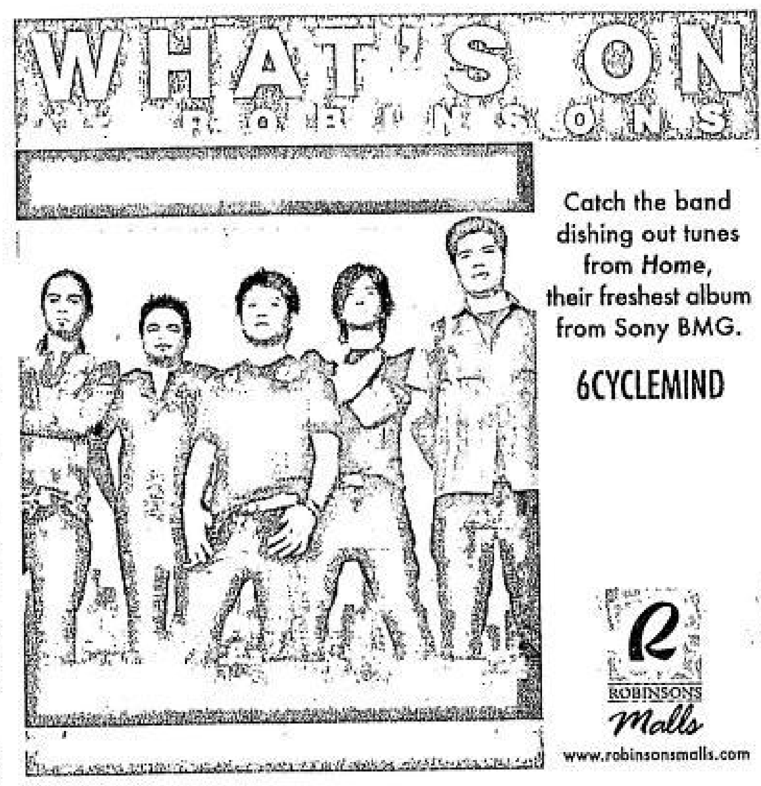

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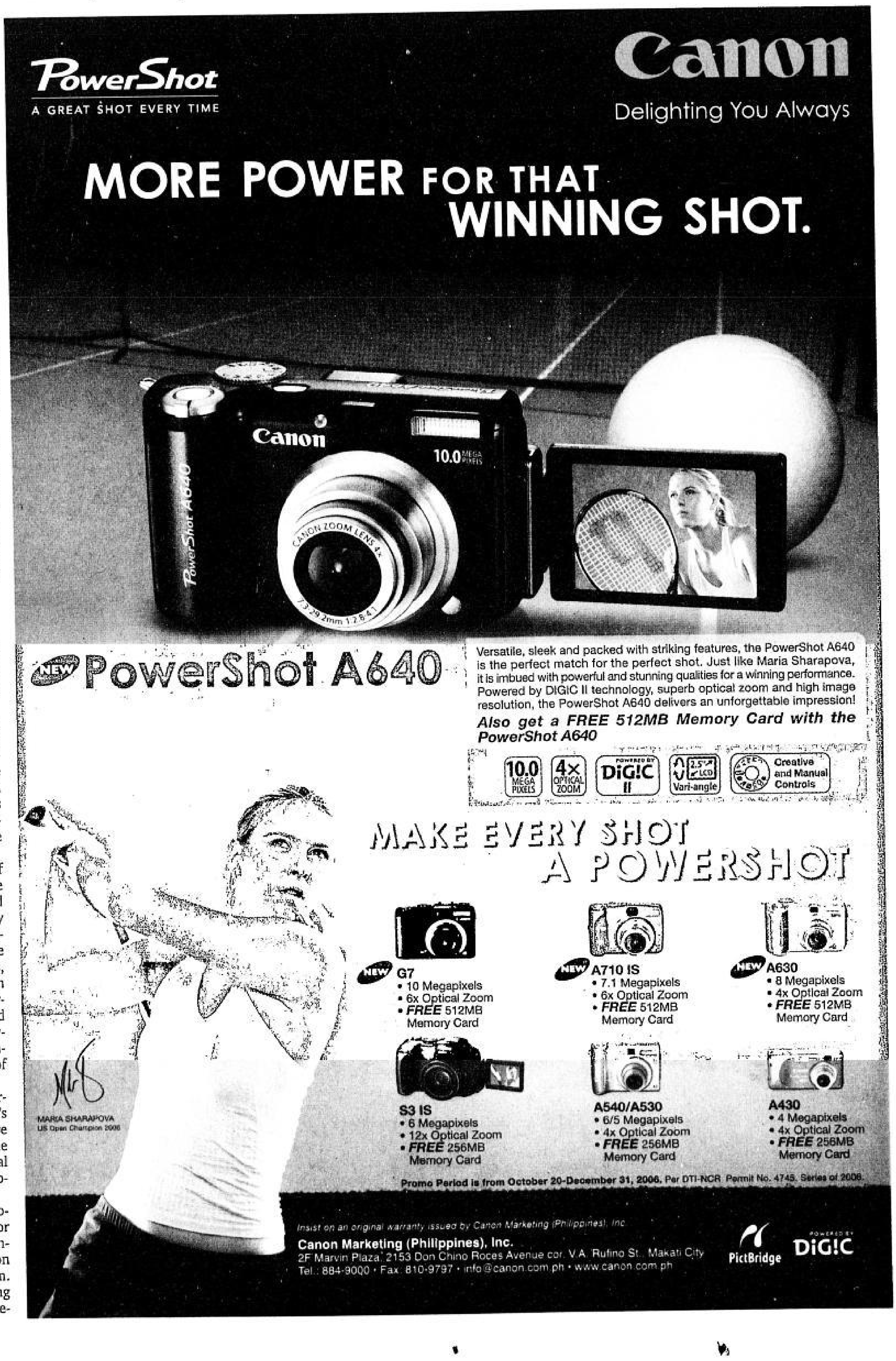

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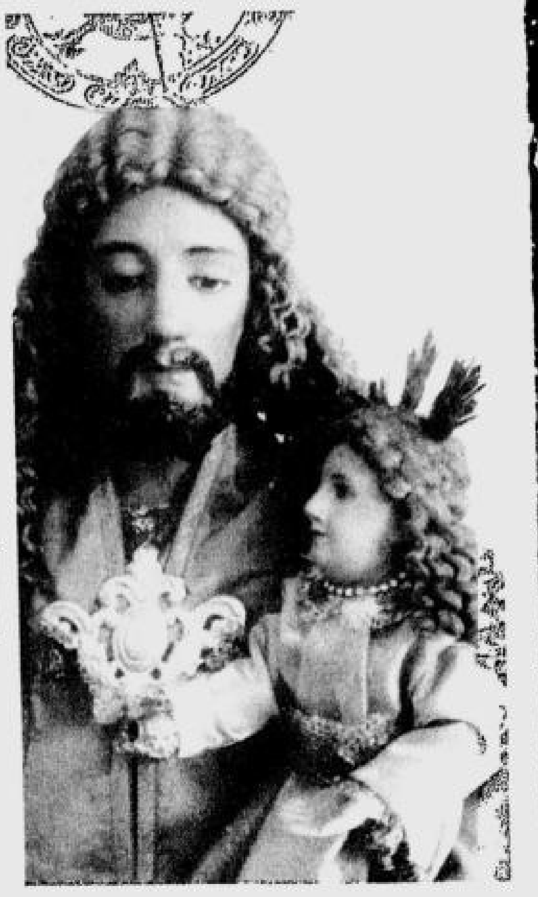
Icons of St. Joseph on exhibit



SAN JOSÉ con Niño Jesus, an early 20th-century piece courtesy of Gino Marasigan

A BACK-TO-BACK EXHIBIT WILL OPEN at the Museo de Santo Domingo in Quezon City as part of the celebrations commemorating the centennial of the canonical coronation of Our Lady of the Rosary, La Naval de Manila, as Patroness of the Philippines. The fourth and fifth in a series of exhibits will begin on March 10 and 24, respectively.

The fourth exhibit "San José, Esposo de la Virgen" will feature various images and depictions of St. Joseph, the patron of the universal church. Gino Marasigan with his early 20th-century image is the *hermano* of the exhibit, together with the Cofradia de San José headed by Rolly Tayo.

Other images and icons will be provided by designers Manny Castro; Steve de Leon; Fr. Roland dela Rosa, OP; Fr. Robie Reyes, OP; Nena Bernales; Ting Escobar; Deus Antique Shop; Toots Munar; and museum curator Rei Nicolas.

The special veneration of St. Joseph began in the east where the apocryphal "History of Joseph" enjoyed great popularity in the fourth to the seventh centuries. In the ninth century Irish Felire of Oengus, a commemoration is mentioned, but it was not until the 15th century that the veneration of St. Joseph in the west became widespread when his feast day was introduced into the Roman calendar in 1479. The devotion was particularly popularized by St. Teresa of Avila and St. Francis of Sales.

The chaplain of the shrine, Rev. Fr. Roberto Pinto, OP will open the exhibit on March 10, at 4:30 p.m., with a blessing at the information lobby of Santo Domingo Convent. The exhibit runs until March 19.

The fifth exhibit "Misterios Dolorosos" will open at the Museo on March 24 and will run until April 6. It highlights the rosarian character of Santo Domingo Church, with rare images, icons, photos and prints of the suffering Christ and the Mater Dolorosa on exhibit.

SAN JOSÉ from the collection of Rei Nicolas

VIRGEN Dolorosa, owned by Tom Joven

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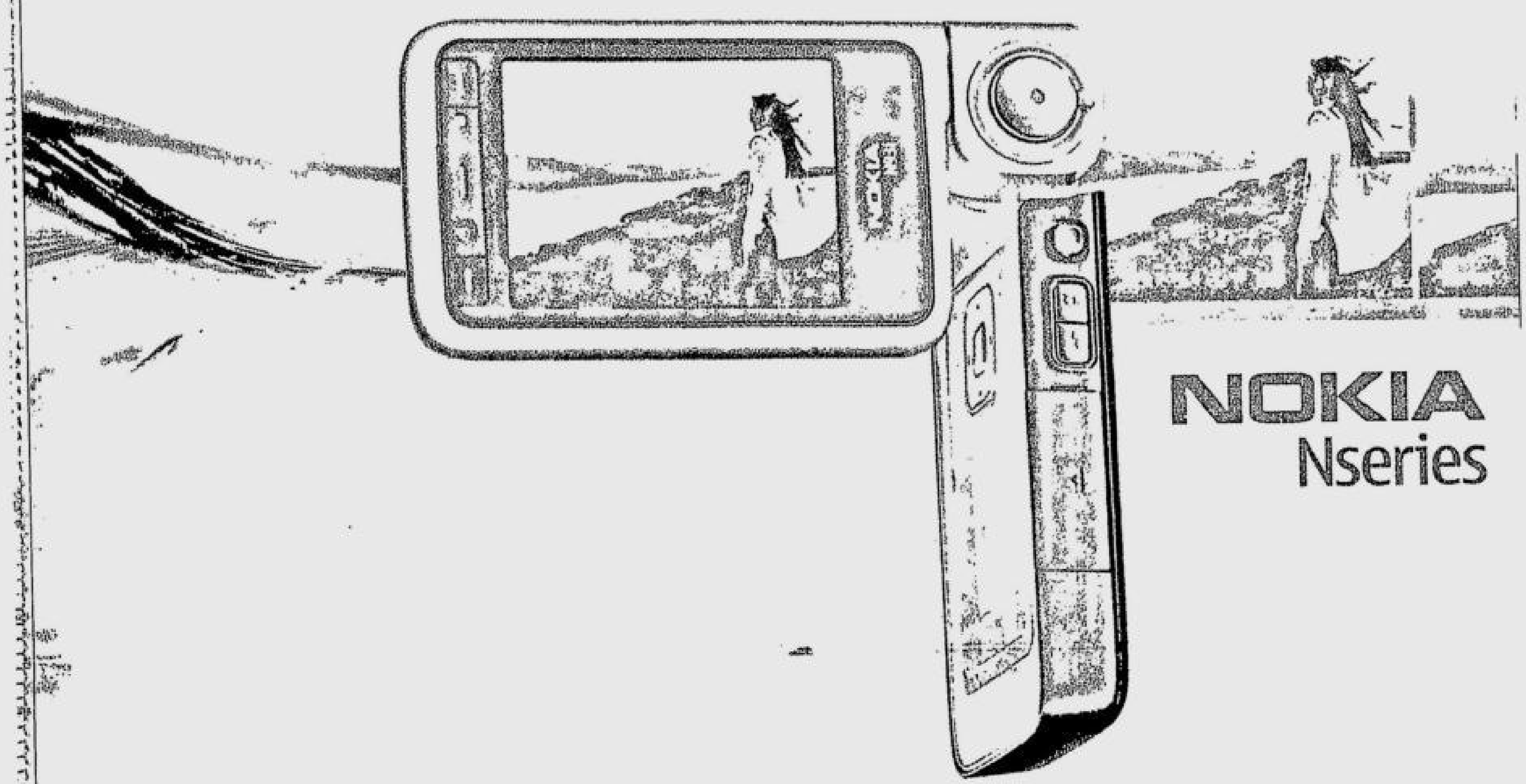

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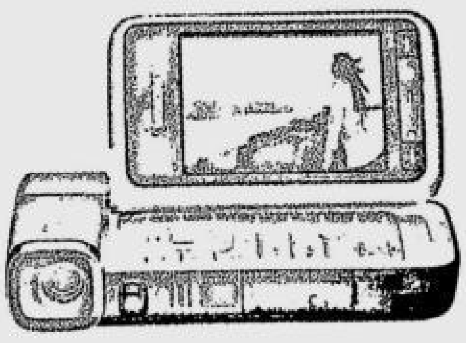

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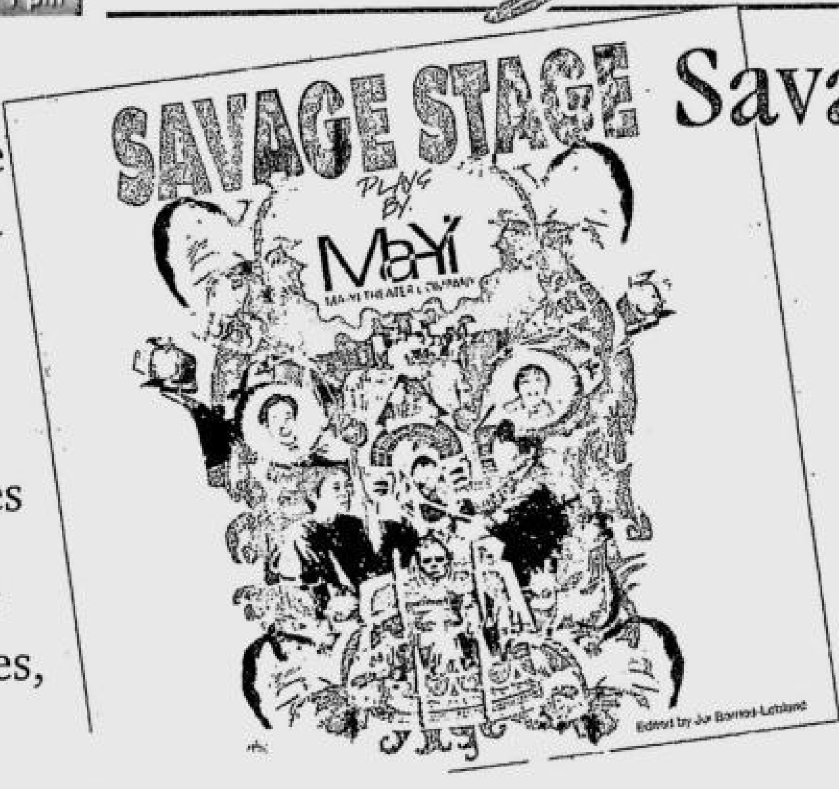
Savage plays, itinerant arts

The Ma-yi Theater Company's "Savage Theater" anthology and CCP's "Lakbay Sining" stories expand perspectives on Asian-American and Filipino cultures, respectively



By Gibbs Cadiz

IN 2005, THE FORD FOUNDATION launched a new grant-making program for the arts called Artography. Its stated goal was "to recognize, strengthen, and reflect on exemplary artistic and organizational practice as seen through the lens of changing demographics in the United States."

In other words, the grant "aims to investigate the creation of art in a fast-changing USA—how the changing demographics, ethnicities, mixed marriages and all that impact on the creation of art, and not just due to ethnicity but also because of the new types of tools available—video, film, puppetry, installation art, theater," explains Jorge Ortoll.

Ortoll is the executive director of the Ma-yi Theater Company of New York, a troupe founded and run by Filipino artists and dedicated to staging all-original works by Asian-American play-

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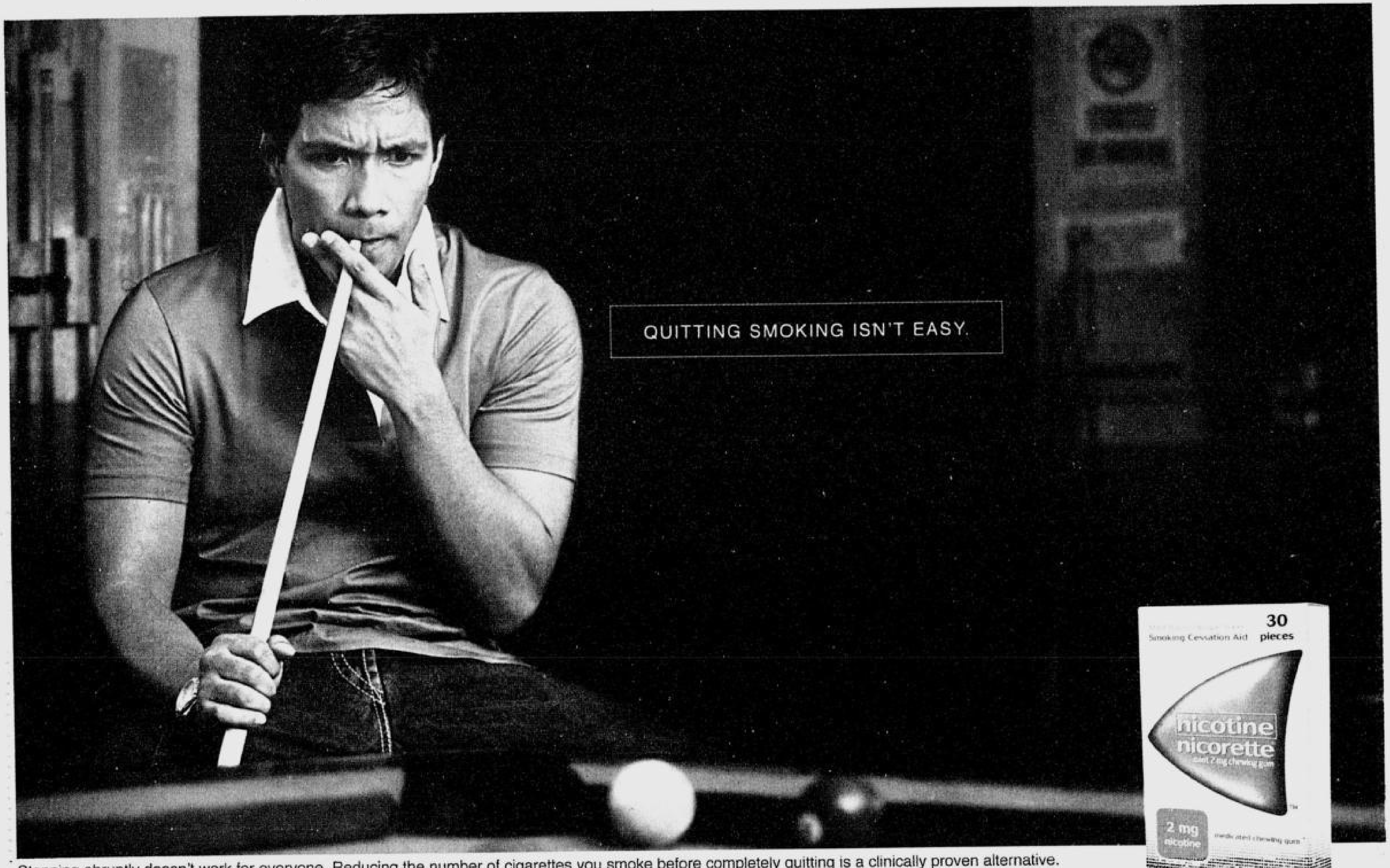

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Doctors back smoking reduction to successful quitting

Doctors agree that smoking is such a hard habit to break, as tobacco dependence is both physical and psychological. They know that going "cold turkey" may not work for all smokers since it involves strong will and determination. One alternative to this is smoking reduction which may be suitable for smokers who cannot stop abruptly but whose ultimate goal is to eventually beat the habit.

Smoking reduction can be defined as a sustained decrease in cigarette consumption in smokers who are unable or not ready to quit abruptly.

Dr. Lenora Fernandez, Clinical Associate at the UP College of Medicine, Philippine General Hospital, sees the benefit in cutting down on cigarette intake as a way of completely dropping smoking. "Clinical studies have shown that cutting down stimulates interest in smoking cessation. The good thing about this method is that the smoker, soon to be successful quitter, goes through the process with control and at his own pace."

Just within 20 minutes of dropping the cigarette stick, healing takes place within the smoker's body. "Studies have shown that cutting down by 50% will increase the chances of success, which can be done within 6 weeks," added Fernandez.

Cutting down on cigarette smoking, when supplemented by Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), presents more promise. NRT is the use of various forms of nicotine delivery methods intended to replace nicotine obtained from smoking or other tobacco products.

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Lola Bebang's radio days

By Johnathan Libarios Rondina
Contributor

BORN IN 1915 IN STA. CRUZ, MANILA, Genoveva Edroza-Matute recalls that in her time women walked slightly behind their husbands and were mostly housewives who tended after their children. Against this backdrop of female domesticity, Lola Bebang was a voice in the wilderness, conjuring women characters that, much like herself, were ahead of their time.

There is a quiet defiance in Lola Bebang's eyes as she struggles to navigate the short distance between her bedroom and the living room where a group of college students are waiting to interview her for a school project. At 92, Genoveva Edroza-Matute, esteemed educator and celebrated fictionist, continues to defy time with grace, wit, humor, and a sharp tongue to boot.

"We were fighters, *hindi kami nagpa-api*," she answers, when asked how she wants to be remembered.

MATUTE: "We were fighting women"

MARRIED to Epifanio Matute, writer of the classic radio play, "Kuwentong Kutsero"

Radio's golden age

Although many remember Matute as a writer of short stories and essays, her decade-long stint as a soap opera writer during Philippine radio's golden age was significant in the formation of a feminist consciousness via the airwaves.

After World War II, serialized dramas or "soaps" (called as such because they were sponsored by soap manufacturers) like Lina Flor's "Gulong ng Palad," Liwayway Arceo's "Ilaw ng Tahanan," and Matute's "Aklat ng Pag-ibig" earned wide listenership among Filipinos who gathered around their gigantic receivers to hope and struggle, weep and rejoice with celebrities like Gloria Romero and Rosa Rosal. In the days before video killed the radio star, radio was king and Matute was the royal scribe who wrote about women protagonists who were strong-willed, educated, professionals and achievers.

"*Noon wala pang salitang feminismo*," Matute remembers, "*Pero sa akin hindi bida 'yung babaeng inaapi, iyak ng iyak. Sa akin hindi bida 'yun. Alipin yun, tanga! Sa akin, 'pag inaapi ka lumaban ka! Pag hindi ka lumaban alipin ka! Kaya ang sabi nga nila: 'eh bakit naman ang tatapang naman ng mga babae doon sa iyong drama?' Ewan ko, kasi ako matapang ako eh.*"

Post-colonial resistance

Her courageous spirit also pushed Lola Bebang to the forefront of many other ideological battles. Because soaps were then produced by American manufacturing companies, American executives intervened in the creative process, often dictating plots and characters. Once, she recalls an American executive insisting that a female character walk her dog. "In the Philippines, we don't walk our dogs," she retorted, "if we did, they'd end up as pulutan!"

Matute waxes nostalgic as she reminisces her friendships with Arceo and Flor, her sisters-in-arms against American interventionism: "*Sa loob-loob namin ni* Lina (Flor), *'wag ka nang makipagtalo. Tutal naman pag ginagawa na namin, nababago na namin hindi na nila alam. Hindi naman sila nakikinig. Hindi naman sila marunong ng* Tagalog. *Paglabas namin, kaming tatlo, si* Liwayway (Arceo), *ako, si Lina mag-uusap-usap. 'Eto ang* culture *naming tatlo. Paglabas namin dito, gago labas nila. Hindi namin sila iniintindi. Akala nila, binabago na namin. Hindi lang nila alam.*"

Love for country

Today, in her twilight, Lola Bebang's nationalist resolve remains steadfast. As her audience of young *colegialas* gather around her, listening intently and eager to inherit her pearls of wisdom, she gifts them with her words: "*Ang masasabi ko, 'wag nyong kalimutan ang bayan nyo. Hindi bale kung lumabas kayo dahil walang makain, dahil walang kabuhayan dito. Pero, 'wag naman 'yung paglabas mo hindi ka na babalik sa bayan mo.*"

92-year-old writer Genoveva Edroza Matute will receive the St. Hildegard Award for Women in Media

SHE WROTE the classic "Kuwento ni Mabuti," the first ever Palanca grand prize winner for short fiction

For her pioneering work as a feminist writer for radio, Genoveva Edroza-Matute will receive the 1st Hildegard Award for Women in Media and Communication from the Women in Media Program of St. Scholastica's College (SSC) at 5 p.m. today at the St. Cecilia's Hall of the SSC Campus along Leon Guinto, Malate. The other awardees are Dr. Nora Quebral for development communication, Feny de los Angeles Bautista for children's television and QTV Channel 11 for women-centered programming. The awards ceremonies are open to the public. Call 5216382.

Savage plays, itinerant arts

From page D1

wrights. He can speak knowledgeably about Artography, because out of some 500 arts institutions across America who were invited to apply for program grants, Ma-yi was one of only nine that were eventually chosen.

"We were the only theater company to be chosen, and on top of that we were the only NY-based company, so we were really flattered and excited," he says.

The other grantees represent groups of diverse artistic persuasions, including the Arab-American Museum in Detroit, the Diaspora Vibe Gallery in Florida (dedicated to works by Caribbean immigrants), the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance, the muralists represented by the Chicago Public Art Group.

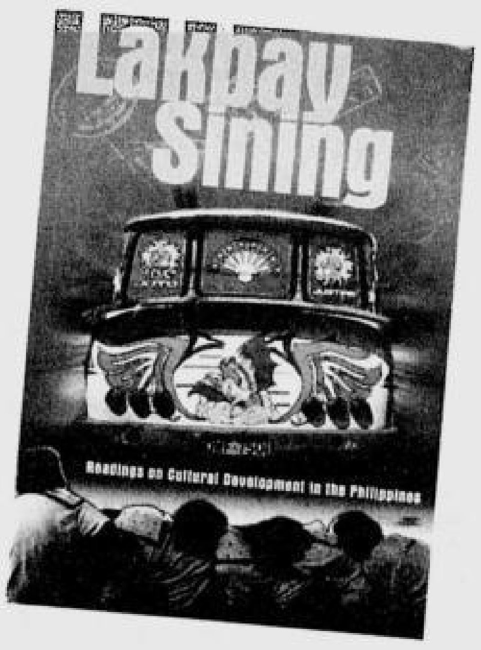
Enthusiastic reviews

Ma-yi's grant of around $140,000 is spread over a two-year period, which will end this year. The financial support is an institutional vote of confidence in what this theater company does best: produce groundbreaking plays on the Asian-American experience that have won for it a raft of Obie awards, as well as enthusiastic reviews from New York's most exacting theater critics.

"We pride ourselves in doing new work, all-original work," says Ortoll. "Once in a while we may do an adaptation, but we prefer to commission, develop, workshop a play to death and finally produce it, or farm it out, since we can't possibly produce everything that we commission."

Nine of the plays that Ma-yi has successfully staged since its founding in 1989 now appear in book form, "Savage Stage," an anthology edited by Joi Barrios-Leblanc. The book, one of the projects Ma-yi has undertaken in the wake of its Artography grant, features a pan-Asian repertoire—plays by US-based Filipinos, Vietnamese, Thai, Chinese, even one co-written with an American playwright.

"'The Romance of Magno Rubio' was by a white playwright, Lonnie Carter, but based on a Filipino story and the characters were all Filipinos. Our writers don't have to be exclusively Asian or Asian-American, but either the theme has to be Asian or Asian-American, or the playwright is, or both," says Ortoll.



The collection includes "Middle Finger" by Han Ong (recently adapted to Filipino by Ronan Capinding and presented as "Middle Finger Po" by Tanghalang Ateneo), "Woman From the Other Side of the World" by Linda Faigao-Hall, "Wave" by Sung Rno, "Trial by Water" by Qui Nguyen, "Savage Acts"—a collaborative work by Kia Corthron, Jorge Ignacio Cortinas, Hang Ong and Sung Rno, "Flipzoids" by Ralph Pena (Ma-yi's first big triumph, praised by the NY press as "stylish ... funny and compelling"), "PeregriNasyon" by Chris Millado, "The Romance of Magno Rubio" by Lonnie Carter and Loy Arcenas (now Ma-yi's longest-running and most-awarded production), and "Project: Balangiga" by Ralph Pena and Sung Rno.

Why "Savage Stage?" As Barrios explains in her comprehensive introduction, Ma-yi's plays are a means to interrogate the "trope of savagery" that has been used against non-Western peoples to justify colonialism and imperialist aggression.

"The creation of a theater of disturbance, the use of elements of the savage as weapons of dissent and history as a strategy of radical theater" are means to "confront and counter" stereotypes about what's "foreign and despicable" to standards of Western civilized society.

"Savage Stage" will be launched in Manila in July this year. Anyone interested in the uniquely brilliant theatrical discourse offered by the "first-rate" (New York Times) Ma-yi Theater Company should have a copy of this book.

Cultural development

Another book that deserves space in any theater buff's bookshelf is the recently launched "Lakbay Sining: Readings on Cultural Development in the Philippines," published by the Cultural Center of the Philippines with Anvil Publishing.

The book is a collection of stories related to the CCP's Outreach and Exchange Program, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2004. It was this program that helped CCP shed its image as an elitist, Imeldific enclave by bringing to the country's far-flung provinces plays and musical performances that previously were only accessible in Manila. Conversely, it also spearheaded efforts to cultivate grassroots and community efforts in the arts, giving heritage and creative groups in the provinces the chance to interact with and appreciate each other's artistic activities.

"Lakbay Sining"'s stories are written by contributors who were in the thick of the action themselves.

"Duyan ng Magiting" by Armando Sta. Ana offers a thorough accounting of the many programs Bulacan initiated in its pioneering push to preserve its rich history and culture. Acclaimed playwright Malou Jacob writes in "The Descent of Philippine Theater" how this art form "lost its healing power" and how it can retrieve its place in community ritual and consciousness.

Funny reading

The travails of ordinary cultural workers make for poignant and funny reading, reminding us of the valorous dimensions required in propagating art and culture appreciation in a country soaked to the bone in fancy Western influences.

Joey Ayala, for instance, ticks off in "Chicken Soup for Artists on Tour" what it takes to go on tour and introduce Filipino audiences to an unfamiliar sound—in this case, his Bagong Lumad music, "exotic and fresh and weird and well-intentioned" to the ears of Manila's arts and culture editors circa 1987, he says.

Riya Brigino in "Living It, Loving It" recalls how research for a planned production by the Marawi-based Sining Kambayoka theater group led to both near-death and sublime experiences traversing jungle and mountain to reach the Subanon tribe of Zamboanga.

And Herminio Beltran Jr. documents, in "Why Artistic Genius Can be Found in the Hinterlands of Davao and Isabela," the indigenous creativity just waiting to be tapped in underprivileged provincial folk, from fishermen in Bohol composing native songs to Iloilo high school teachers launching into poetry and performance.

Chinggay Jasareno-Bernardo, in her introduction to this collection of stories, calls "Lakbay Sining" "a treasure trove of insights and discussions about art practice and processes in the Philippine provinces." It is that, and so much more—a profile of the Filipino artist as unsung hero of our age.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph; visit www.gibbscadiz.com

UST holds centennial forum on Alejandro Abadilla, father of modern Tagalog poetry

THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO Tomas will hold the Alejandro G. Abadilla Centennial Forum on March 10, 1 to 5 p.m., at the Central Library Hall of the Miguel de Benavides Central Library Bldg., UST campus, Manila.

Organized by the Department of Languages, Literature and Philosophy of the Faciltuy of Arts and Letters, and the Varsitarian, the official student paper of UST, the forum will feature papers and discussions on Abadilla (born March 10, 1906; died Aug. 26, 1969; Litt.B Philosophy, UST, 1931), the father of modern Tagalog poetry.

National Artist and Ramon Magsaysay laureate Bienvenido Lumbera will deliver the keynote address. Plenary lecturers are Efren Abueg of De la Salle University-Dasmariñas and Florentino Hornedo of UST.

There will be two panel discussions. Discussants are Rebecca Añonuevo of Miriam College and UST; Gary Devilles of Ateneo and UST; Roland Tolentino of UP-Diliman; Mike Coroza of Ateneo and UST; and Vim Nadera of UP-Diliman.

The forum is open to the public. Call Prof. Ferdinand Lopez, 0917-5373168.

2007 Dumaguete writers workshop launched

NATIONAL ARTIST FOR LITERAture Edith L. Tiempo has announced a March 31 deadline for applications for fellowships to the National Writers Workshop to be held in Dumaguete City from May 7 to 25.

Applicants seeking fellowships in poetry, short story and creative nonfiction, all in English, should submit a minimum of eight poems or two or three stories or personal essays for the respective genres, in hardcopy as well as in a Word file disk.

Additional requirements are a letter of application, CV, two color photos, and at least one reference letter from a literature or creative writing professor or a nationally recognized writer.

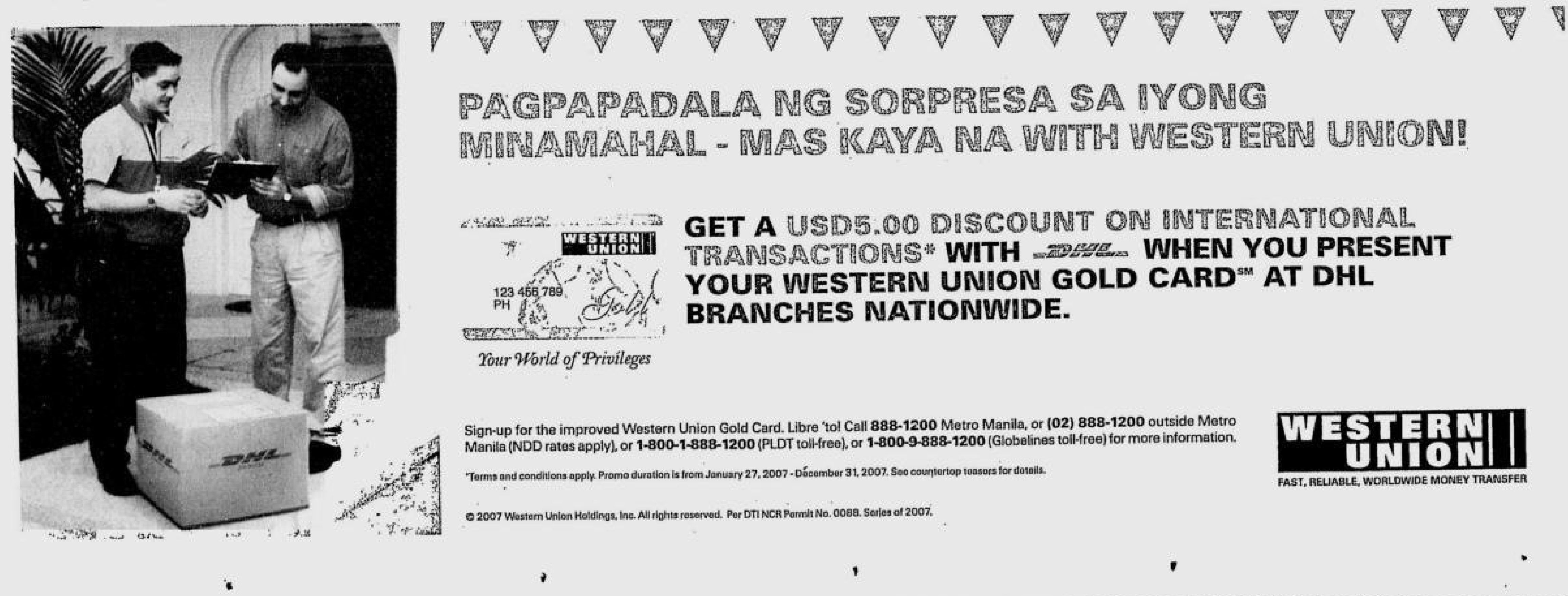
Fellowships will cover board and lodging for three weeks, a modest stipend, and partial reimbursement of travel costs to Dumaguete and back.

Interested parties may also apply for sit-in or auditing privileges. Address all communication to Dr. Edith L. Tiempo, 2nd Floor, CAP Bldg, Rizal Blvd, Dumaguete City 6200.

The National Writers Workshop was established by Edith and Edilberto Tiempo in 1962, making it the longest-running creative writing workshop in Asia. Its 46th edition this summer is co-sponsored by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, CAP College, and Silliman University, in coordination with the Creative Writing Foundation, Inc. and the Dumaguete Literary Arts Service Group or DULA, Inc. headed by Atty. Ernesto Superal Yee.

Donors to the fellowship program include Senators Edgardo J. Angara and Mar Roxas as well as former NCCA Chairman Jaime Laya and Ms Erlinda Panlilio.

Among the panelists expected to assist Dr. Tiempo are Dumaguete-based writers Yee, Bobby Villasis and Cesar Ruiz Aquino, as well as guest panelists Dr. Gémino H. Abad, Dr. Marjorie Evasco, Susan Lara, DM Reyes, Dr. Anthony Tan and Krip Yuson.



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Encore for 'Virtuoso Strings'

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

LAST YEAR THE "Virtuoso Strings" concert was conducted on a big scale at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, with two symphony orchestras and a battery of 12 pianists. This week, on March 9 at 8 p.m. to be exact, the organizers are planning to duplicate, if not surpass, this feat.

The encore for "Virtuoso Strings" will bring together 120 instrumentalists, plus foremost soprano Rachelle Gerodias and dancers from Ballet Philippines. "It's something that has never been done before here and maybe abroad," claimed a member of one of the sponsoring organizations, Olga Martel of Johann Strauss Society, in a press conference at CCP.

Perhaps to underscore the point, she turned over to CCP president Nestor Jardin a check of P1.023 million which the JSS was able to raise for the event. "Virtuosos Strings" will be staged at the CCP's Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo (Main Theater) on March 9.

During the presscon, the University of Santo Tomas (UST) Guitar Ensemble led by Ruben F. Reyes displayed their virtuoso (pun not intended) skills with Barrios—Mangore's "Danza Pataguaya," while the youthful Cainta Los Trobadores Rondalla under the direction of Lino Mangandi, delighted the audience with their rendition of Vivaldi's Spring from the "Four Seasons."

CHINO Toledo

CLAUDE Haberer (BNP Paribas)

Claude Haberer, North Asia CEO of BNP Paribas, main sponsor of the concert and one of the largest banks in the world, said it has policy of sponsoring cultural events and at one time supported the largest piano competition, which was held in Europe.

"In a business sense," the Frenchman added, "the CCP is one of the best venues where we can project our presence in the Philippines." He, Haberer said, has "a 25-year-old friendship with CCP." As for Filipino Artists, he noted, "they are on international level."

The other performers in the concert are violinist Alfonso "Coke" Bolipata, cellist Renato Lucas, pianist Mary Ann Espina, and three orchestras: The Philharmonic Orchestra under Eugene Castillo, the Metro Manila Community Orchestra led by Chino Toledo, and the UST Symphony Orchestra conducted by Herminigildo Ranera.

Guest artists are violinist Angelo Bard of Germany and classical guitarist Thibault Cauvin of France.

The program is an eclectic mix of works by European, Filipino and American composers, ranging from Bach's Concerto in D Minor (for two violins, strings and continuo) to Willy Cruz's "Sana Maghintay Ang Walang Hanggan."

There will be also a medley of Beatles songs as arranged by leading composer Chino Toledo of the MMCO.

"This is a 'ploy' to broaden the audience and to attract as many people as we can," said stage director Chris Millado.

Solo dancers will "enhance" the music, while soprano Gerodias will demonstrate "the human voice as an instrument." Another "surprise" will be guitarists coming in from the sides to serenade the audience.

For tickets to "Virtuoso Strings," call 8321125.

UST Symphony Orchestra

Catanduanes fundraiser

THE GRADE-SCHOOL DEpartment of St. Scholastica's College, Manila will have a variety show on Women's Day, March 8, titled "Womyn n Power" at 8-10 a.m and 1:30-3 p.m. The teachers and staff perform excerpts from "Why Women Wash the Dishes" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Proceeds will go to the typhoon victims of Catanduanes. For inquiries, call 5247686.

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WESTERN UNION

CineVita to screen film based on John Paul II play

"MOTHER TERESA," THE film biography of the Nobel Peace laureate and canonized saint, and "The Jeweller's Shop," the film adaptation of John Paul II's three-act play on love and marriage, will be the opening and closing foreign films of the CineVita Film Festival on March 7-9, at the Thomas Aquinas Research Center, University of Santo Tomas, España, Manila.

Organized by the Varsitarian, the 79-year-old student publication of UST, the festival will run local and international features, shorts, documentaries, and digital films that showcase life-affirming stories on spirituality, cultural and moral formation, family values, and personal and social renewal.

MOTHER Teresa

The film fest celebrates "life, truth and faith" through the movies.

Films tackling bioethical themes will be shown: Rica Arevalo's "ICU Bed #7" (euthanasia); Prolife Philippines' "Sigaw ko, Pakinggan Mo" (abortion); "Artificial vs Natural"; and "AIDS: What You Haven't Been Told." Also to be shown is the naturalistic movie, "Penguin, Penguin, Paano Ka Ginawa?" with narration in Filipino by Sharon Cuneta.

Internationally acclaimed Filipino films with social, moral and religious dimensions to be shown include Milo Tolentino's "Orasyon"; Jeffrey Jeturian's "Kubrador"; and Brillante Mendoza's "Manoro," which is the official opening movie of CineVita.

Prominent personalities will give lectures on film and media ethics such as Cinemalaya Film Festival vice president Laurice Guillen; INQUIRER editor and Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino film critic Lito Zulueta; indie film director Rica Arevalo; UST aesthetics professor Josephine Pasricha; and Titus Brandsma Media Center director Fr. Christian Buenafe.

Directors of the films will give short talks, and the cast and crew of "Manoro" and "Kubrador" including Jonalyn Ablong and Gina Pareño, will grace the festival.

CineVita is a nonprofit and educational endeavor of the Varsitarian together with the Titus Brandsma Center Media Program, Pro-Life Philippines, UST Institute of Religion, UST Journalism Society and UST Literary Society.

All documentaries and local films are open to the public. Foreign full-length films are exclusive to lecturers, film critics and students. Admission is free. Visit www.varsitarian.com; call 4061611 loc. 8235.

FROM BOOK TO FILM

'Notes on a Scandal' shocks and provokes

By Eldric Paul A. Peredo
Contributor

THE OLD SAW THAT MAN IS A SOCIAL creature has never been examined in the way that "Notes on a Scandal" did when it rolled off bookstore shelves in 2001. Newspaper columnist Zoë Heller's sophomore novel says there is a caveat between two individuals in a society. Since the level of intimacy is more intense, the relationship can also be dangerously deceptive.

In "Scandal," Bathsheba Hart is the new pottery teacher in a rundown school. She's attractive, bohemian, ignorant of the school's inner workings and unmindful of what lies ahead.

Instantly the other teachers crowd around and befriend her. But it is the history teacher, Barbara Covett, who succeeds in getting her trust. As a 20-year veteran in the school, she acts as if everyone, including the staff, is beneath her. She takes a liking to Sheba and treats her as an equal. It seems as if she has found a friend to treasure and protect, quite a turnaround from her otherwise lonely life.

Thus, even when the sex scandal between Sheba and a 15-year-old student breaks out, Barbara sticks to the friendship, shielding Sheba from the attacks. "Now more than ever, we are bound by the secrets we share," writes Covett, the self-appointed scandal scribe (played by theater royal Dame Judi Dench). And Sheba, (queenly Cate Blanchett) is appreciative of Covett's protective friendship.

The characters, however, are far from regal.

While Sheba looks like she leads a fairly good life, with a successful scholar as husband (Bill Nighly), and with two children (one has Down Syndrome, the other is a sullen teenage girl), she craves for the attention of her student, Steven Connolly (newcomer Andrew Simpson), so much so that she enters into a sexual relationship with him. This reveals a crack in our image of Sheba, ironically named after the Biblical figure seduced by King David.

It is a void Barbara is raring to fill. Her record of the scandal, however, far from what readers and viewers would expect as carrying a protective bias, reveals more about her own yearnings. The twist is chilling.

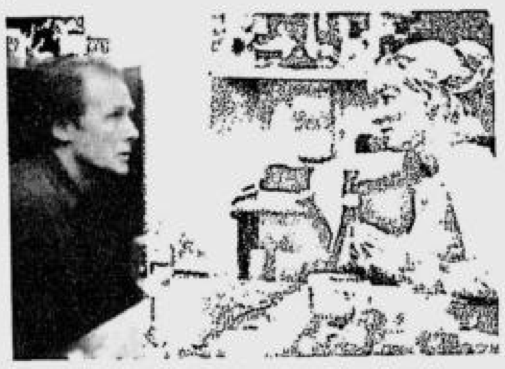
In the movie, however, the twist is realized not as subtly—a usual defect in movie adaptations, considering the limited time to tell the story.

Great performances

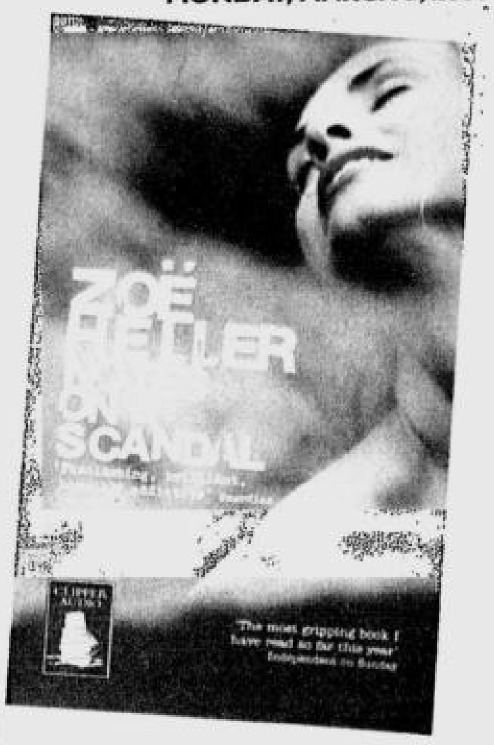
But where the text is lost, the actors step in. And we don't doubt the competence of the actors in this movie. Viewers will be awed by the transformation of Dench—from her usual solemn portrayals into this movie's flighty old fogey. The multi-faceted Blanchett gives a sense of humanity to Sheba.

The movie as directed by Richard Eyre has its way of contributing ambivalence into the story. The music is sinister, and the cinematography, unfussy. With Dench's take on Barbara's diction, there is at once an effort to make the audience wary of the character. Somewhere along the way, Barbara seems piteous. Perhaps that is why her latent venom is all the more shocking when it is unleashed, and the scenes all the more prickly. Blanchett, for all the stereotypes of her, is also difficult to paint.

CATE Blanchett and Judi Dench give powerful performances



BILL Nighy plays husband to Blanchett's sexual-predator character.



But even the actors, in turn, point back to the original material. True. Heller dissects a relationship normally perceived as odious and weighs private truths against those of "organized" society.

On Sheba's alleged crime, Barbara has this to write: "Connolly was officially a minor, and Sheba's actions were, officially speaking, exploitative; yet any honest assessment of their relationship would have to acknowledge not only that Connolly was acting of his own volition but that he actually wielded more power in the relationship than Sheba. I don't think for a minute that he has suffered lasting hurt from his experiences with an older woman. On the contrary, I believe that he's had a rather thrilling ride. Heresy, I know. But there. It's what I think."

Ultimately, the story tells much about its narrator as the subject. We get to know that Barbara is far from the faithful storyteller. We get to realize that her narration is tainted by her own motives, strained through eyes that so desperately desired another pair to meet them.

Hence, we ask if the story about Sheba's ordeal is even the truth in that fictive world. We ask if our oracle has not been speaking while drugged with her own aches.

Man is a social creature, so the adage says. But what becomes of that sociableness? Or what comes out of it? In a world where sincerity is either a luxury or a sacrifice, we might do well to think twice before imbibing the nectar from another's lips.

"Notes on a Scandal" will screen exclusively at Ayala Cinemas starting March 7.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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CHEER FACTOR

CHOCOLATE OSCAR Spanish actress Penelope Cruz eats a chocolate "Academy Award" on stage at the Ariston Theatre in San Remo, during the 57th Italian Music Festival on Friday. Other international guests were Nelly Furtado of Canada, Anggun of Indonesia, and Ammi Stewart, Norah Jones and John Legend of the US. AFP

AJ 'shocked'

"IT WAS DEFINITELY A SHOCK," Fil-Am AJ Tabaldo said of his elimination from "American Idol" on Thursday (Friday in Manila).

He didn't see it coming, he told INQUIRER Entertainment in a conference call early Saturday morning, "considering what the judges told me [on performance night, Wednesday]."

AJ admitted he had felt "underadvantaged." Unlike other semi-finalists, he noted, he didn't get extra exposure via a feature footage that might have helped him secure a fan base. AJ believed those who did were better known to the voting viewers.

On the other hand, the 22-year-old said, he was happy to leave the show on a good note. After singing Nina Simone's "Feeling Good" on performance night, AJ had gotten good reviews from all three judges, including hard-to-please Simon Cowell, who said, "That was nearly very good."

AJ refused to say whether he thought he was more qualified than a few left behind. He simply said, "I was up there with the better singers. I wish I could've stayed longer but this is not only a singing competition; it is a reality show as well."

Three others booted this week were Alaina Alexander, Leslie Hunt, and Nicholas Pedro.

Kathryn Fatima Reyes

AJ TABALDO

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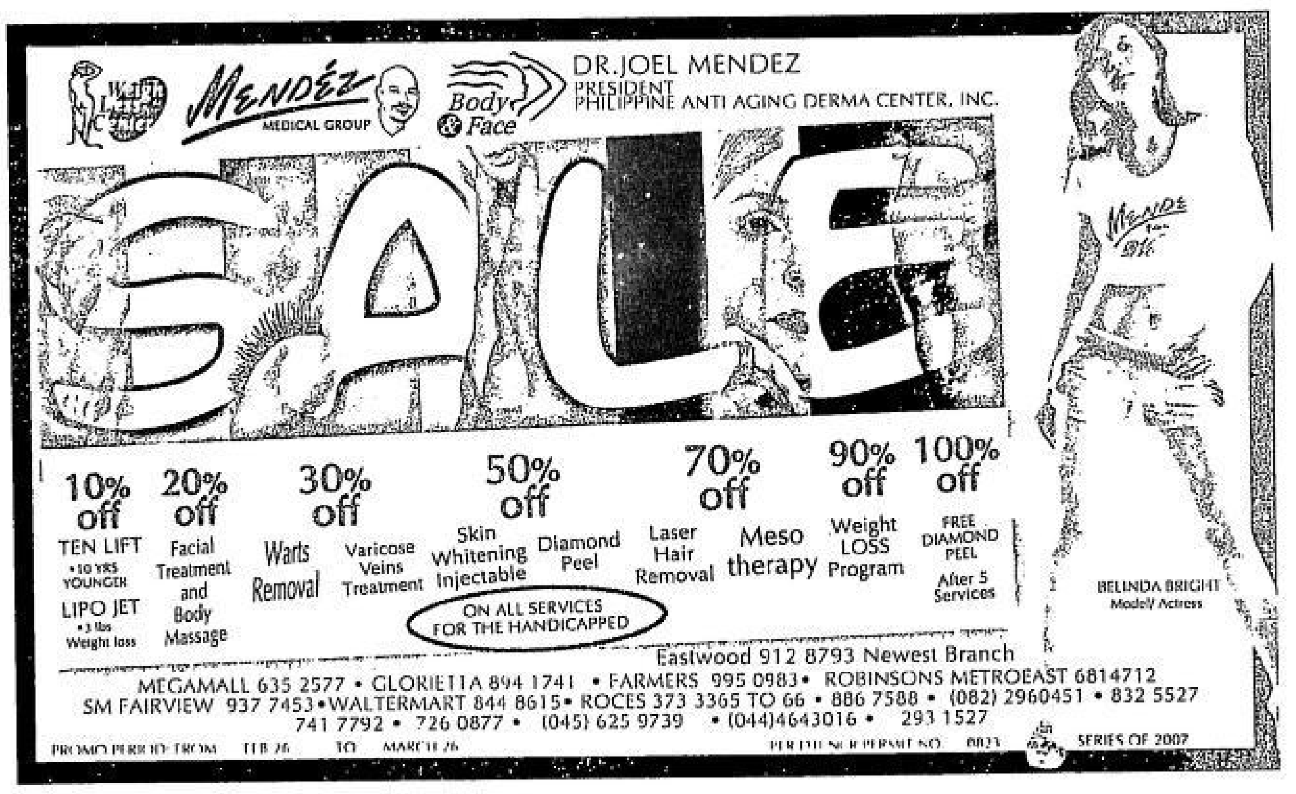

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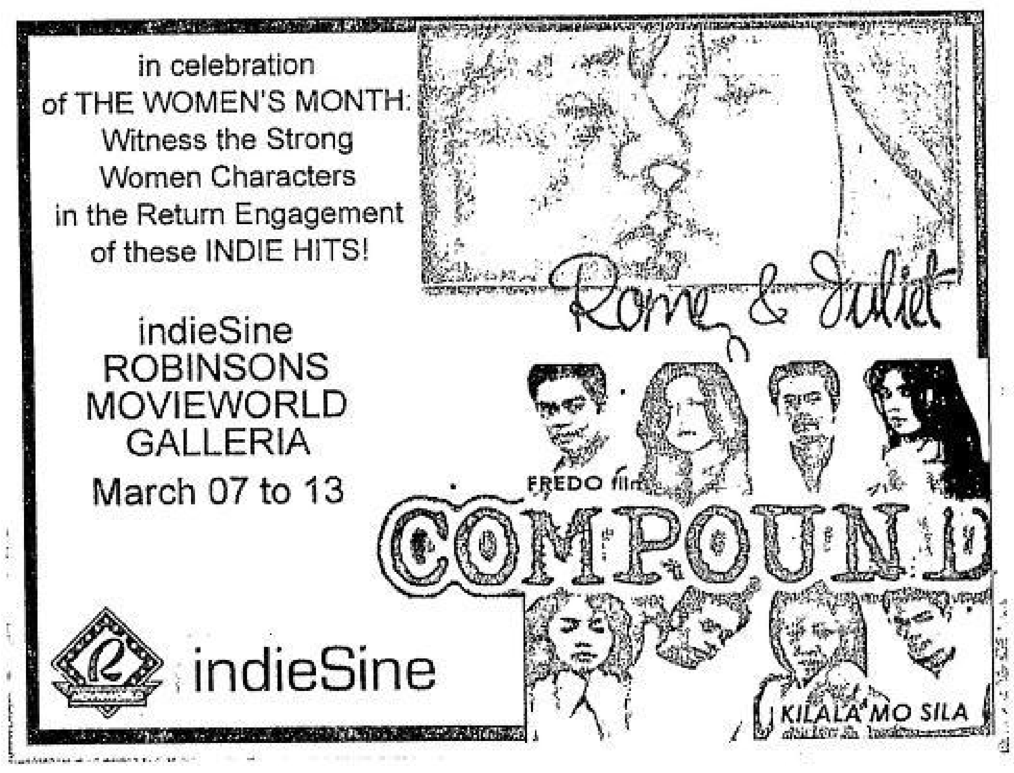

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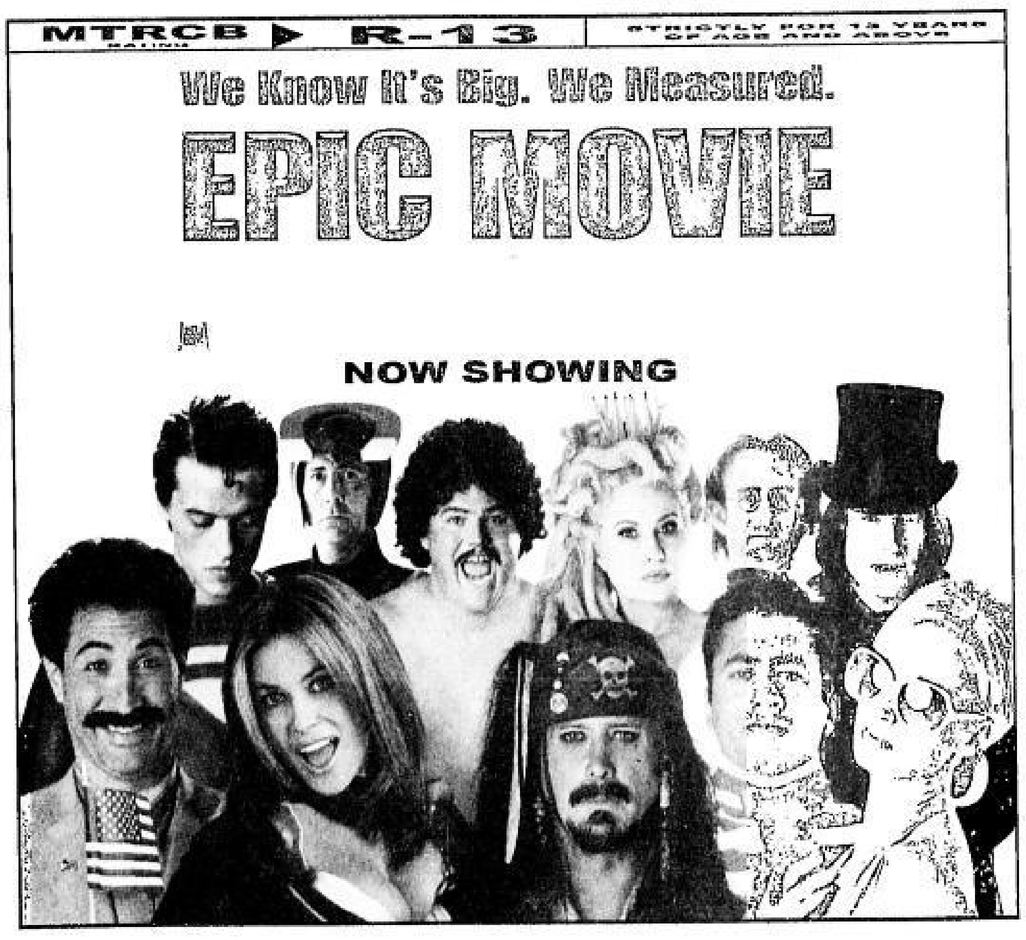

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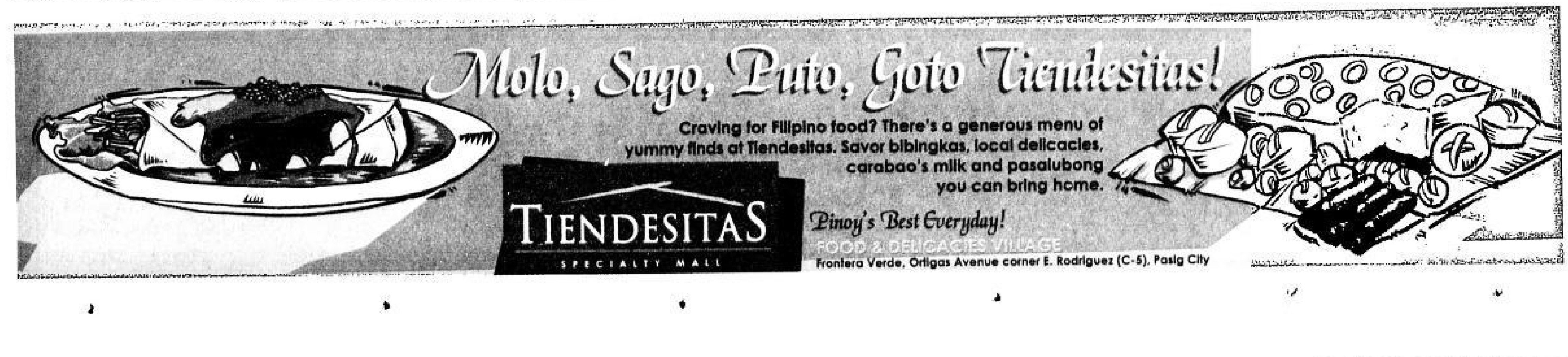

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2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE CLEANER
4 TROIKA
5 BABEL

DASMARIÑAS

Ticket Price: P75 / 80
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1 BOA
2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

ANGELES

Ticket Price: P 90
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1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 TROIKA
4 THE FOUNTAIN

IMUS

Ticket Price: P100
(046) 875-3838
(046) 471-8188

1 PRIMENVAL
2 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
3 YOU GOT ME
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

STARMILLS

Ticket Price: P75 / 80
(045) 875-1927

1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 TROIKA
3 THE PROMISE
4 YOU GOT ME
5 PRIMEVAL
6 GHOST RIDER

BACOLOD

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1 MUSIC and LYRICS
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PRIMEVAL
6 APOCALYPTO

ILOILO

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1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 MUSIC and LYRICS
4 APOCALYPTO
5 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
6 GHOST RIDER

MMTA
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MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 FLUSHED AWAY
DREAM GIRLS
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
3 YOU GOT ME
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS

PREMIERE
PRIMEVAL

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1 GHOST RIDER
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

starmall

EDSA-SHAW

(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3 PRIMEVAL
4 GHOST RIDER
5 RESRVED

metropolis star Cinema

www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 5433994

1 THE PROMISE
2 YOU GOT ME
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL

THEATRES

1 MUSIC & LYRICS
2 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3 YOU GOT ME

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC

Pacific Mall Lucena

☆ YOU GOT ME
☆ BABEL
☆ RESRVED
☆ RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA

(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 GHOST RIDER
3 EPIC MOVIE
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 PRIMEVAL
7 FLUSHED AWAY
8 YOU GOT ME
9 NUMBER 23
10 THE PROMISE

Blue Wave

MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 5341927

1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE PROMISE
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

MARKETPLACE

Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 THE PROMISE
2 THE MESSENGER
3 TROIKA
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA

(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 GHOST RIDER

Center Mall Cinema

Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1 PRIMEVAL
2 APOCALYPTO

Jade Cinema

(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE FOUNTAIN
4 BLOOD CHOCOLATE

Centre Plaza Cinema

(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 THE MESSENGER
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 IT'S A BOY THING
2 FLUSHED AWAY
DREAM GIRLS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

CINEMA 2000

Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PRIMEVAL
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall

(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix

(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 THE PROMISE
2 YOU GOT ME
3 GHOST RIDER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown

(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 YOU GOT ME
2 THE PROMISE
3 BABEL
4 APOCALYPTO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart

(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME

Cinema 2000 Waltermart

(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1 THE PROMISE
2 YOU GOT ME

Lianas Cinema

(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1 TROIKA
2 THE PROMISE

Lianas Cinema

(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2 SAPLOT
3 LITTLE CHILDREN
4 THE MESSENGER

Lianas MovieCity

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 YOU GOT ME
2 RED ROSES
3 THE PROMISE
4 TROIKA
5 THE PROMISE

Fiesta World Mall

(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 CODENAME THE CLEANER
2 GHOST RIDER
3 TROIKA
4 YOU GOT ME

Berma Cinema

(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 TROIKA
2 THE MESSENGER

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

DID YOU KNOW...

LONDON—Movie commentators wonder if British actor Daniel Radcliffe could sustain the role of Harry Potter, in light of his raunchy publicity shots for Peter Shaffer's controversial play "Equus," which "could alienate him from his core fan base."

Radcliffe, 17, has signed up for the final two films in the seven-part Harry Potter series, his spokeswoman said Friday. *Reuters*

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FLUSHED AWAY
G
2:00,4:00,6:00,8:00

DREAM GIRLS
PG13
2:20,5:00,7:40,10:20

BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
G
1:25,3:35

PRIMEVAL
R13
1:50,4:00,6:10,8:20

YOU GOT ME
G
1:10,3:25,5:40,7:55,10:10

IT'S A BOYGIRL THING
PG13
1:45,3:55,6:05,8:15,10:25

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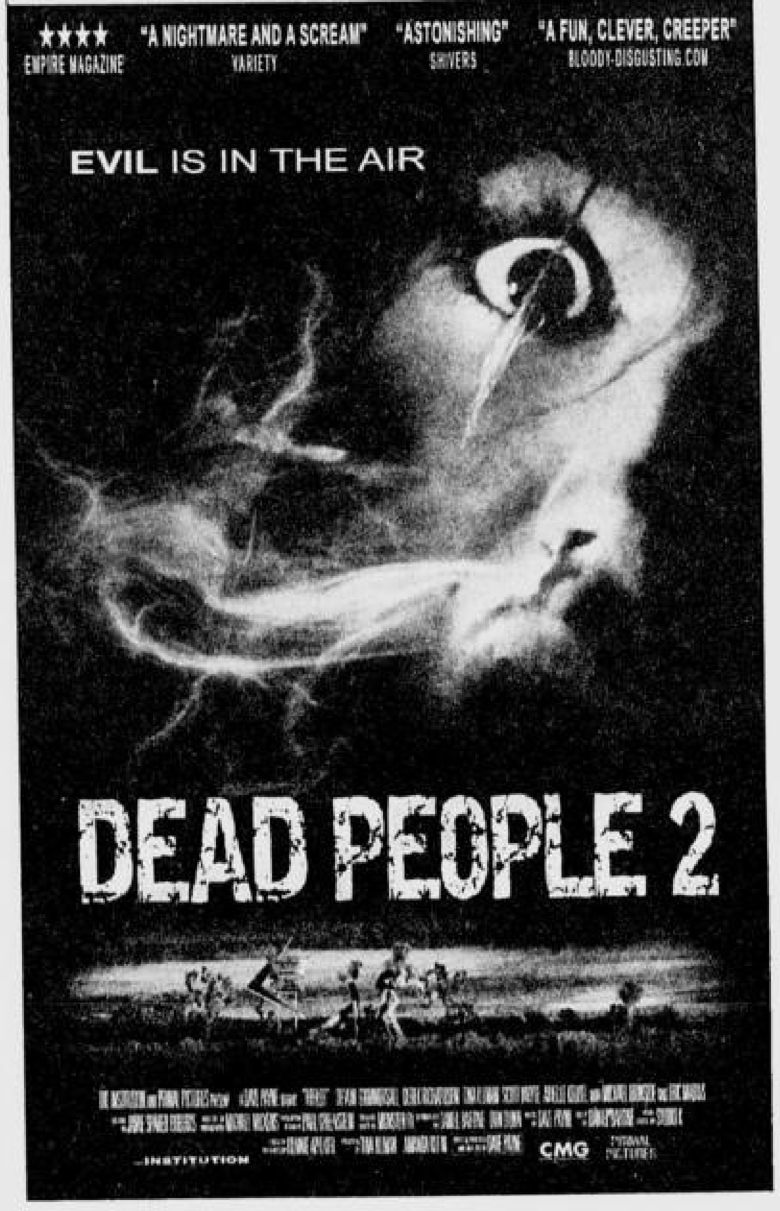
OPENS MARCH 7
MTRCB PG-13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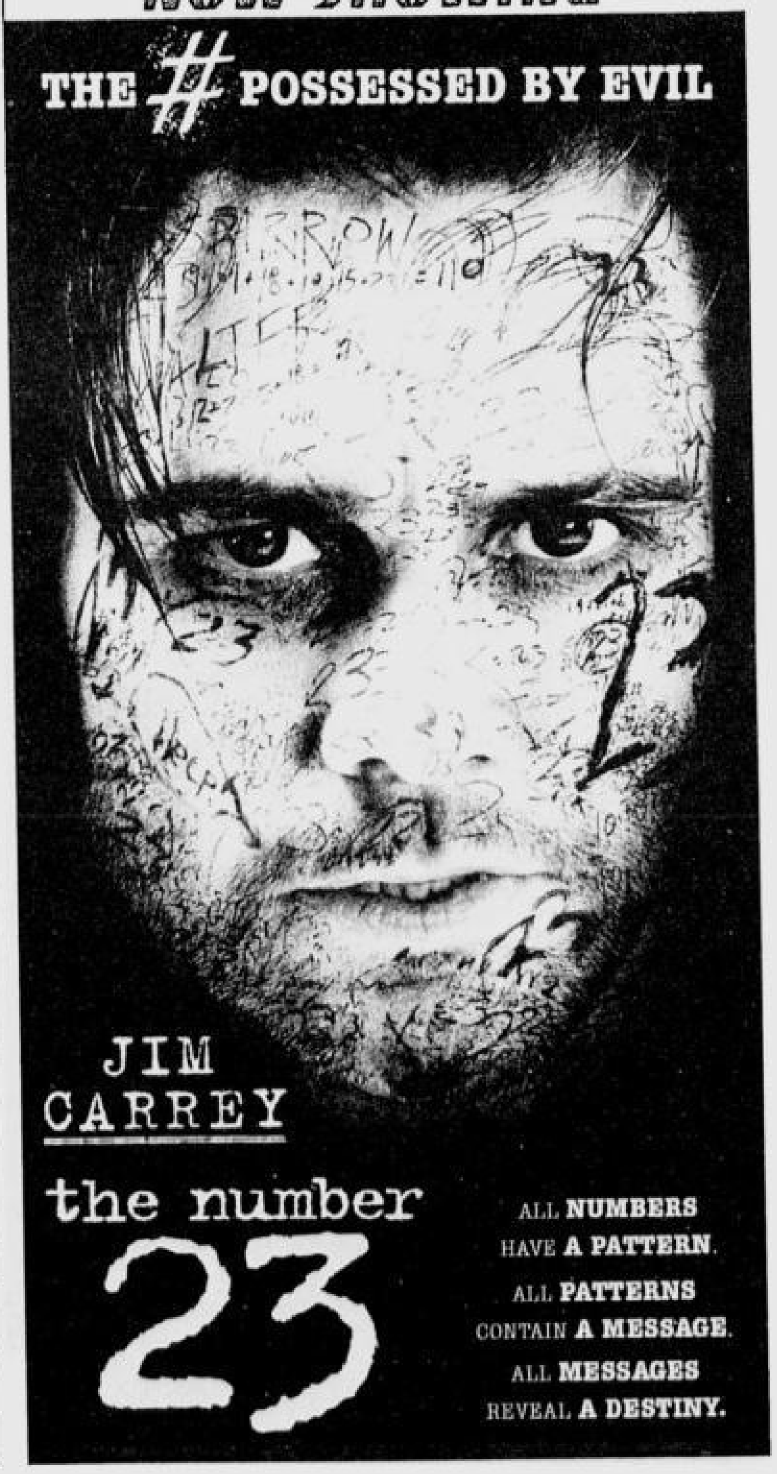
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JIM CARREY
the number 23
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ALL PATTERNS CONTAIN A MESSAGE.
ALL MESSAGES REVEAL A DESTINY.

A promise unfulfilled

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

"THE PROMISE"

WE WENT OUT OF OUR WAY TO WATCH "The Promise," to see how its stars, **Angel Locsin** and **Richard Gutierrez**, would manage their much-touted transformation, from teen stars to "more mature" performers.

Well, they can be credited for doing their darnedest, but hard work and daring don't quite do the trick, because the more challenging emotional requirements of their roles in the latest cinematic approximation of "Wuthering Heights" often elude them.

Their characters start out as childhood soul mates, then fall in love and dream of a beautiful life together. Alas, a wealthy scion is captivated by Angel's obvious charms and Richard is quickly canceled out of the equation.

Before he permanently steps out of her life, however, he makes love to Angel (on the steps of a lighthouse, even) and she eventually gets pregnant. Angel's wealthy husband gets mentally unhinged by this, and the film rushes pell-mell to its operatic—melodramatic—tragic finale.

This dramatic denouement is too big, broad and pathetic for the young leads to manage or redeem. Despite their best efforts, they reveal their callousness and shallowness. It really isn't their "fault," but is the product of miscasting.

In other words, young leads who haven't developed sufficiently shouldn't be tasked to play characters whose emotions are too mature or lush for them to handle. That kind of material would require more emotionally mature and perceptive performers, otherwise the insufficiency will show.

The production also errs by requiring Richard's character to seek vengeance by disappearing in the big city for some years and making a lot of money at various *sub-rosa* trades, *then* returning to Angel triumphantly on a sleek yacht, with jewelry and signature sunglasses to complete the poor-rich transformation.

Alas, such a major character change can't be managed through the simple use of props and post modes of transportation. What has it done to Richard's interiority, his practically having sold his soul to the devil? Well, he smiles less and smolders more, but that's about it.

'Overnight' transition

This is unfortunate, because Richard and Angel are popular young actors who should appear in good movies, to enhance their reputations and to expose their droves of fans to better films.

To do well, however, they should be properly cast in roles that they can get emotionally comfortable with. So, the transformation should be done *gradually*, with the young stars' development setting the pace. "Overnight" transitions can be inadequate and thus embarrassing, to say the least.

Despite unfulfilled promises like this production, we continue to hope that, in time, Richard and Angel can finally pull off the perfect combination of judicious casting, good material and competent performances that should by rights be theirs before they turn 25.

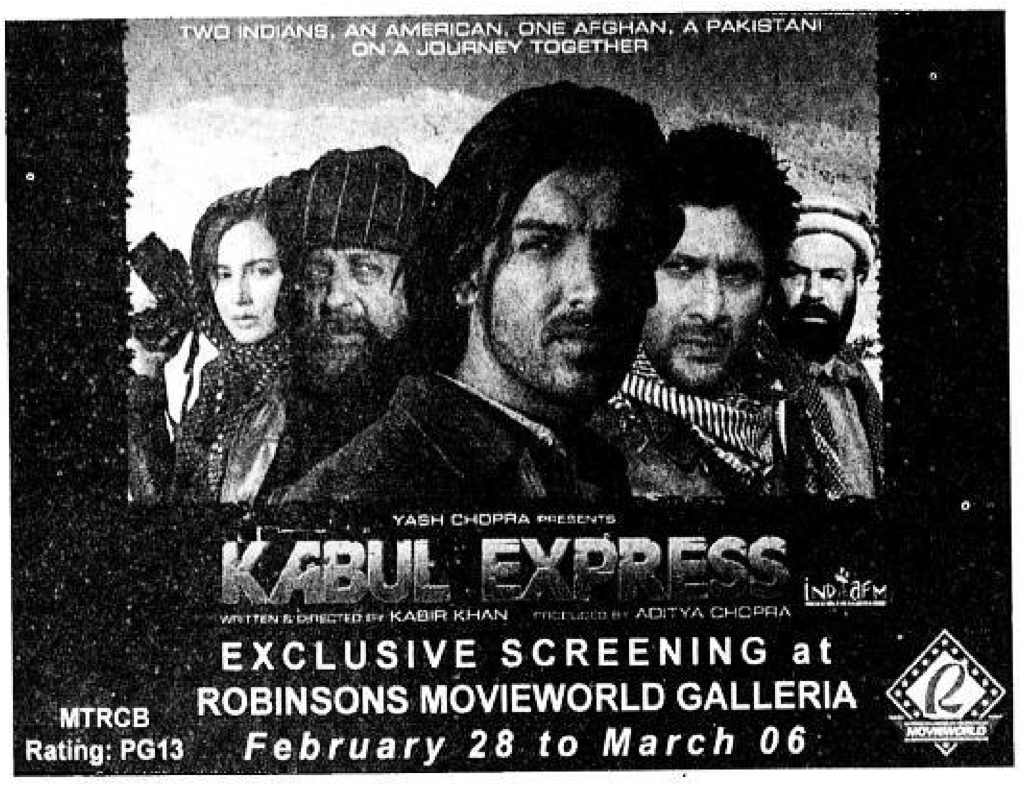
As for the production itself, it too is earnest, but too stereotypically melodramatic and heavy to be captivating and inspiring. An earlier "Wuthering Heights"-inspired drama, "Hihintayin Kita Sa Langit," was light as air and benefited greatly from its lovely and dramatic Batanes locations, while "The Promise" is visually heavier and clunkier—so, where's the inspiration?

'Superman Returns'

The hit action-adventure "Superman Returns" now soars on DVD, delivering an epic story, spectacular special effects, exhilarating action and strong performances from **Brandon Routh, Kate Bosworth,** and **Kevin Spacey**. Bonus features: a "Resurrecting Jor-El" featurette, and the full-length documentary, "Requiem for Krypton: Making 'Superman Return'."

'Crime Stories'

The new season of "Crime Stories" began on March 2, 11 p.m. on the Discovery Channel. The investigative series chronicles the most intriguing and baffling crimes, unveils techniques used in solving them, and dramatizes what victims' families, criminals and sleuths experience in the course of the investigations.



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FLUSHED AWAY 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00
YOU GOT ME 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30
NUMBER 23 1:10 / 5:30 / 9:50
BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA 3:20 / 7:40
Globe PLATINUM CINEMA
PRIMEVAL 12:25 / 2:45 / 5:05 / 7:25 / 9:45
MUSIC & LYRICS 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45
GHOST RIDER 4:50 / 9:50
EPIC MOVIE 12:30 / 2:50 / 7:40
DREAMGIRLS 12:35 / 3:20 / 6:05 / 8:50
Ali MALL 5
1 PRIMEVAL 1:15 / 3:35 / 5:55 / 8:15
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 1:20 / 3:35 / 5:50 / 8:05
3 YOU GOT ME 12:00 R3 / 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20
4 THE PROMISE 12:00 / 2:05 / 4:10 / 6:15 / 8:20
5 GHOST RIDER 1:05 / 3:35 / 6:05 / 8:35
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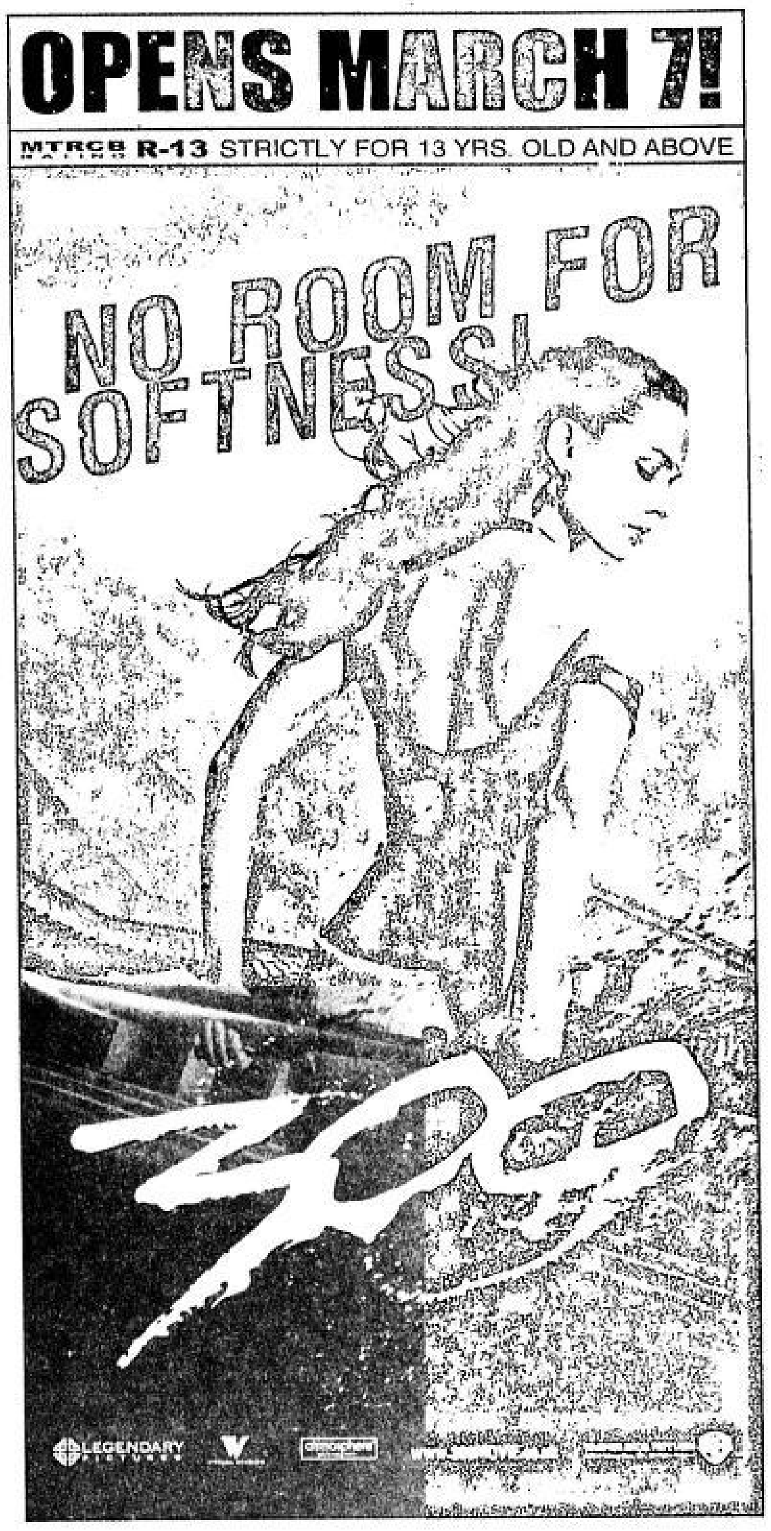

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1 EPIC MOVIE
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
5 THE PROMISE
6 PRIMEVAL
7 GHOST RIDER
8 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
9 FLUSHED AWAY
10 NUMBER 23
11 YOU GOT ME
12 YOU GOT ME

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 PRIMEVAL
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 GHOST RIDER
4 DREAMGIRLS
5 THE PROMISE
6 YOU GOT ME
7 EPIC MOVIE
8 FLUSHED AWAY
9 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
10 YOU GOT ME
11 NUMBER 23
12 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
2 YOU GOT ME
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 GHOST RIDER
5 THE PROMISE
6 PRIMEVAL
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 YOU GOT ME
9 DREAMGIRLS
10 EPIC MOVIE
11 NUMBER 23
12 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 YOU GOT ME
2 GHOST RIDER
3 DREAMGIRLS
4 PRIMEVAL
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 EPIC MOVIE
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 THE PROMISE
9 NUMBER 23
10 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 DREAMGIRLS
2 PRIMEVAL
3 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
4 GHOST RIDER
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 YOU GOT ME

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 DREAMGIRLS
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 GHOST RIDER
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 EPIC MOVIE
7 NUMBER 23
8 PRIMEVAL
9 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 PRIMEVAL
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 DREAMGIRLS
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 GHOST RIDER
7 FLUSHED AWAY
8 MUSIC AND LYRICS
9 YOU GOT ME
10 THE MESSENGERS
11 NUMBER 23
12 THE PROMISE

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 GHOST RIDER

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 PRIMEVAL
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 NUMBER 23
4 YOU GOT ME

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2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 GHOST RIDER

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2 THE PROMISE
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 YOU GOT ME
7 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
8 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 PRIMEVAL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 THE PROMISE
5 YOU GOT ME
6 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE HOLIDAY
3 YOU GOT ME
4 BABEL

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE FOUNTAIN
5 YOU GOT ME
6 YOU GOT ME

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1 BABEL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE CLEANER

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 YOU GOT ME
2 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 BABEL

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1 YOU GOT ME
2 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL

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1 YOU GOT ME
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 GHOST RIDER
4 NUMBER 23

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 PRIMEVAL
2 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 YOU GOT ME
5 THE CLEANER
6 GHOST RIDER

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1 GHOST RIDE
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE CLEANER
4 PRIMEVAL

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1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 RESERVED
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME
5 GHOST RIDER
6 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
7 RESERVED
8 THE MESSENGERS

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PRIMEVAL
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 MUSIC AND LYRICS
6 THE PROMISE
7 YOU GOT ME
8 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

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1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 THE MESSENGERS

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PG-13
2 FLUSHED AWAY 1:30, 3:40, 5:50 G | DREAM GIRLS 8:20, 11:10 G
3 YOU GOT ME
2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 10:00
G
4 PRIMEVAL
1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
R-13

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 FLUSHED AWAY
MTRCB GP 12.35 2.45, 5.00
DREAMGIRLS
MTRCB PG-13 7.00 10.00
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
MTRCB PG-13
2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30
3 YOU GOT ME
MTRCB GP
2.30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS
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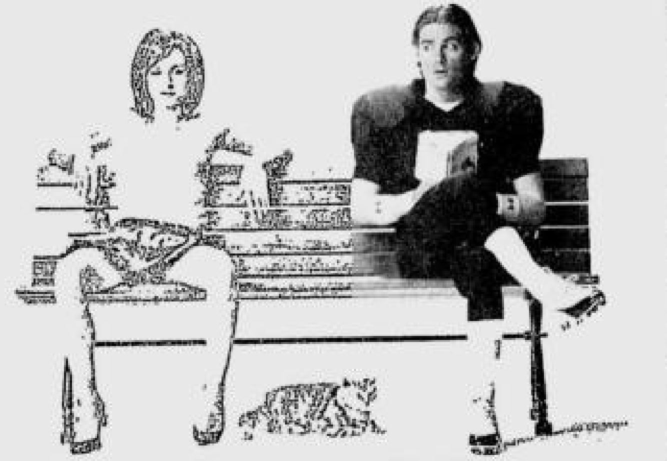

MTRCB PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
kevin zegers samaire armstrong sharon osbourne
it's a boygirl thing
He's the hottest jock.
She's the biggest nerd.
They're sworn enemies.
And they've just switched bodies.
NOW SHOWING
A Mel Gibson Production

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA
THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 YOU GOT ME
11:00, 1:20, 3:40
6:00, 8:20, 10:35
GP
CINEMA 2 PRIMEVAL
10:45, 1:00, 3:15
5:30, 7:45, 10:00
R-13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 ITS A BOY GIRL THING
11:00, 1:20, 3:40
6:00, 8:20, 10:35
PG-13
CINEMA 4 FLUSHED AWAY
11:15, 1:25, 3:35
5:45, 7:55, 10:10
GP
CINEMA 5 DREAMGIRLS
11:35, 2:20, 5:05
7:50, 10:35
PG-13
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM
March 06, 2007 · EDNA LEDESMA · 8:00 PM
" DANCING W/ THE CHAMPIONS "
March 18 & 23, 2007 · SITTI IN LOVE · 8:30 PM
March 30, 2007 · 8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS
EVERY MONDAY · DANCE NIGHT · 7:00 PM
March 9, 2007 · DAVE · 8:30 PM
March 10, 2007 · JOHN LESACA · 8:00 PM
March 15, 22, 29, 2007 · RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO · 8:30 PM
FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116

Will Smith & son in a heartwarming true story
BE INSPIRED - IN THEATERS MARCH 7
MTRCB G ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED
ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE
BEST ACTOR WILL SMITH
"★★★★! ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR. WILL SMITH GIVES THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS CAREER."
Steve Oldfield FOX TV
"TWO THUMBS UP"
"A FEEL-GOOD MOVIE...,RAISE A GLASS TO SALUTE WILL SMITH... HE EMERGES A WINNER."
PEOPLE
"A TOUCHING MOVIE, WITH A BEAUTIFUL AND UNDERSTATED PERFORMANCE FROM WILL SMITH."
Owen Gleiberman, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY
"★★★★! POWERFUL AND UPLIFTING!"
Shawn Edwards FOX-TV
WINNER Will Smith Best Actor
WINNER Jaden Christopher Syre Smith Best Young Actor
WILL SMITH
the PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY
Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

ROUNDUP

Int'l award juror

GMA 7'S ENTERTAINMENT TV SENIOR VICE president Wilma Galvante served as juror for the Comedy category of the last International Emmys—awards of excellence for TV programs produced outside of the United States.

Galvante attended the recent awards rites at the New York Hilton in Manhattan.

"It was a very rewarding experience to judge and seriously scrutinize the comedy styles, production values, costuming and scripting of international broadcasting networks," said Galvante.

"Little Britain," a BBC program, won the award.

The awards are given out by the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the largest organization of global broadcasters with more than 500 members from nearly 70 countries.

"ASIAN TREASURES"

Asian trips

Viewers of the prime time show "Asian Treasures" will have a chance to visit Singapore, Bangkok and Hong Kong and even take an all-expense paid Singapore Asian Cruise.

Viewers will have to answer the trivia question for the day by texting TREASURES <answer>/<name, age, gender, address> to 367.

Open to Smart and Talk 'N Text subscribers, the text promo runs until May 25.

Airing weeknights after "24 Oras" in GMA 7's prime time block, "Asian Treasures" follows Elias (Robin Padilla) and Gabriela (Angel Locsion) as they explore the remotest areas of the country, as well as various Asian destinations, in search of 10 amulets that will lead to the hidden treasures.

Terrorism docu

"Road to Terrorism," the last story in CNN's "World's Untold Stories," will air on March 10, 3 a.m., March 11, 7 a.m. and March 12, 6 a.m.

The documentary is about southern Philippines being a hotbed of terrorist activity, with Jamaah Islamiah, Abu Sayaff and al-Qaida operating in the territory.

The docu provides access to the fight against terrorism in the Philippines at the ground level.

"TWO TWISTED"

Suspense tales

Beginning March 18, Hallmark Channel will be showing "Two Twisted," a dark anthology, on Sunday nights at 11 p.m.

Each episode has two self-contained stories that are sharp, spooky, and unpredicted.

"There's Something About Kyanna" unfolds the mystery of missing objects in a newlyweds' home while "Finding Frank" tells the tale of a fidgety guard who receives a distress call from his "tormentor."

March 25's twin bill presents a mysterious phone call that tells a man he has the opportunity to erase the past in "Call Back," and the gruesome truth about a doctor who had a coronary in "Heart Attack."

Platinum album

"Pinoy Dream Academy" Grand Star Dreamer Yeng Constantino's debut solo album "Salamat" earned a gold record award when it sold 15,000 units only a week after its release.

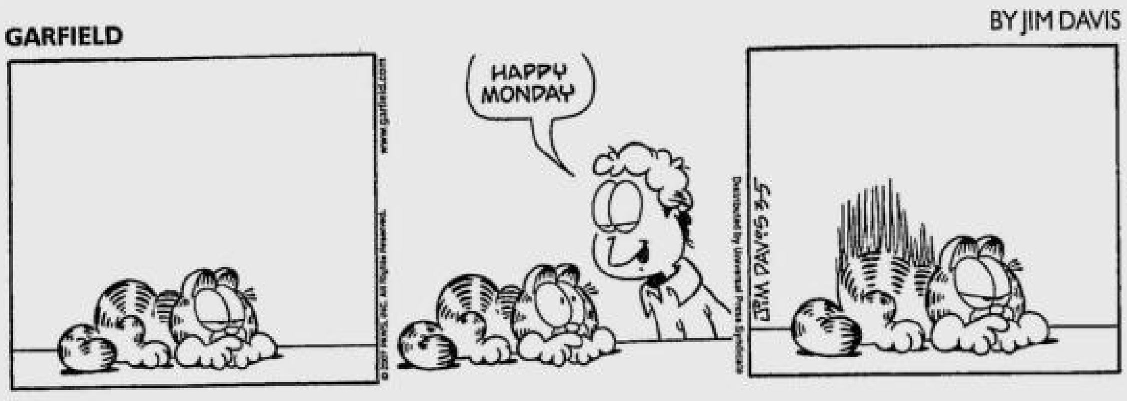
A week later, it went platinum when it sold another 15,000 units.

The Guillermo Mendoza Memorial Scholarship Foundation recently named Yeng the Most Promising Female Recording Artist of 2007.

YENG Constantino

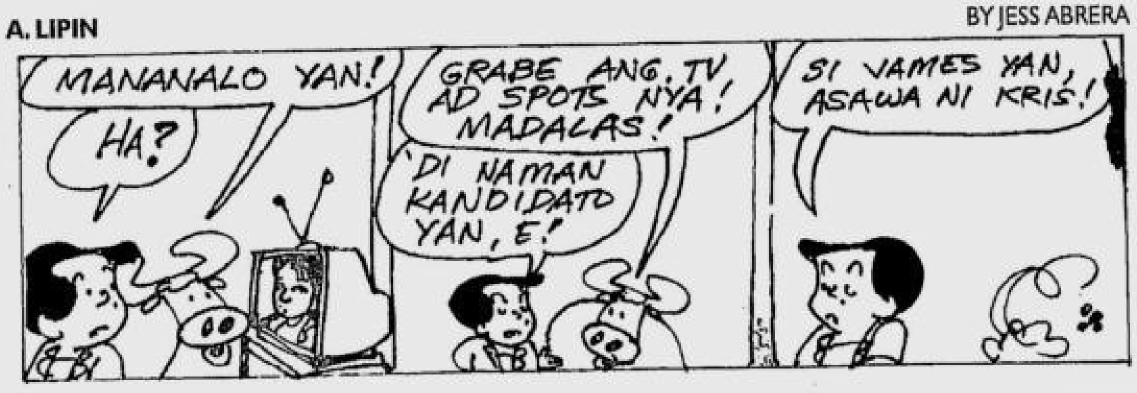
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


HAPPY MONDAY
© 2007 PAWS, INC. All Rights Reserved. www.garfield.com
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate
JIM DAVIS 3-5

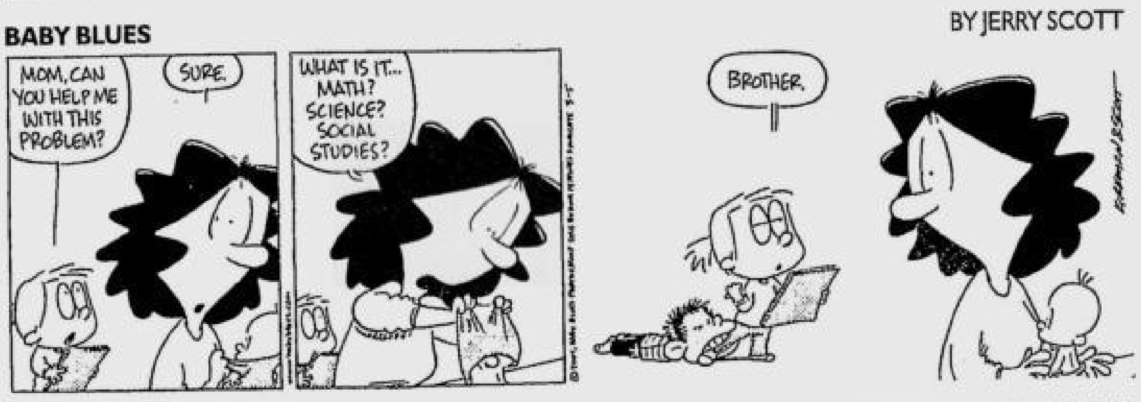
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MANANALO YAN!
HA?
GRABE ANG TV AD SPOTS NYA! MADALAS!
'DI NAMAN KANDIDATO YAN, E!
SI JAMES YAN, ASAWA NI KRIS!

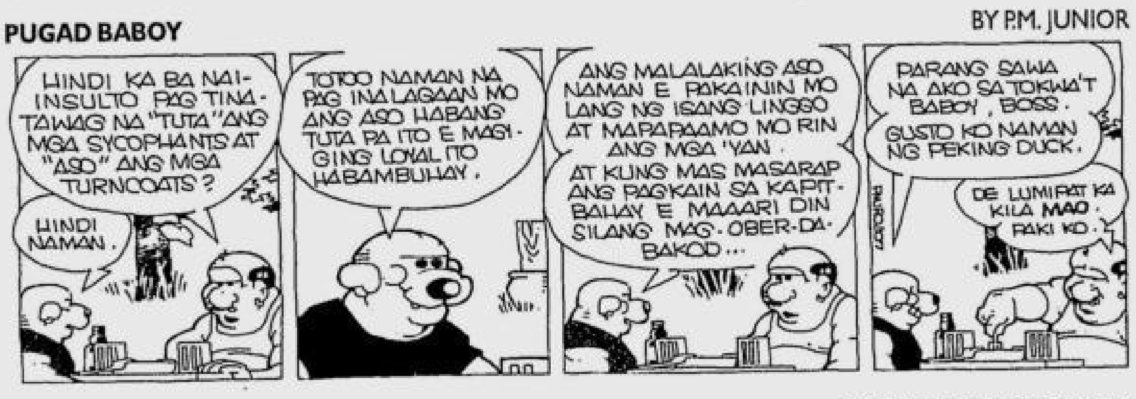
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOM, CAN YOU HELP ME WITH THIS PROBLEM?
SURE.
WHAT IS IT... MATH? SCIENCE? SOCIAL STUDIES?
BROTHER.

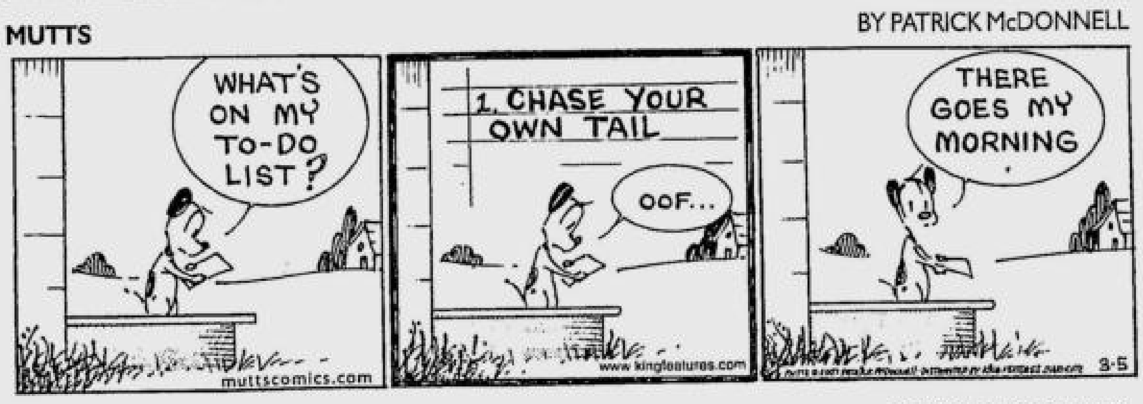
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


HINDI KA BA NAI-INSULTO PAG TINA-TAWAG NA "TUTA" ANG MGA SYCOPHANTS AT "ASO" ANG MGA TURNCOATS?
HINDI NAMAN.
TOTOO NAMAN NA PAG INALAGAAN MO ANG ASO HABANG TUTA PA ITO E MAGI-GING LOYAL ITO HABAMBUHAY.
ANG MALALAKING ASO NAMAN E PAKAININ MO LANG NG ISANG LINGGO AT MAPAPAAMO MO RIN ANG MGA 'YAN.
AT KUNG MAS MASARAP ANG PAGKAIN SA KAPIT-BAHAY E MAAARI DIN SILANG MAG-OBER-DA-BAKOD...
PARANG SAWA NA AKO SA TOKWA'T BABOY, BOSS.
GUSTO KO NAMAN NG PEKING DUCK.
DE LUMIPAT KA KILA MAO. PAKI KO.

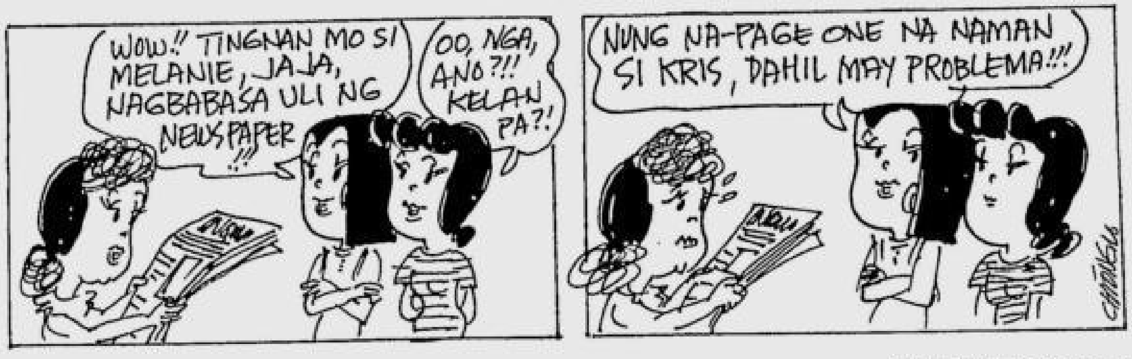
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHAT'S ON MY TO-DO LIST?
1. CHASE YOUR OWN TAIL
OOF...
THERE GOES MY MORNING
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
3-5

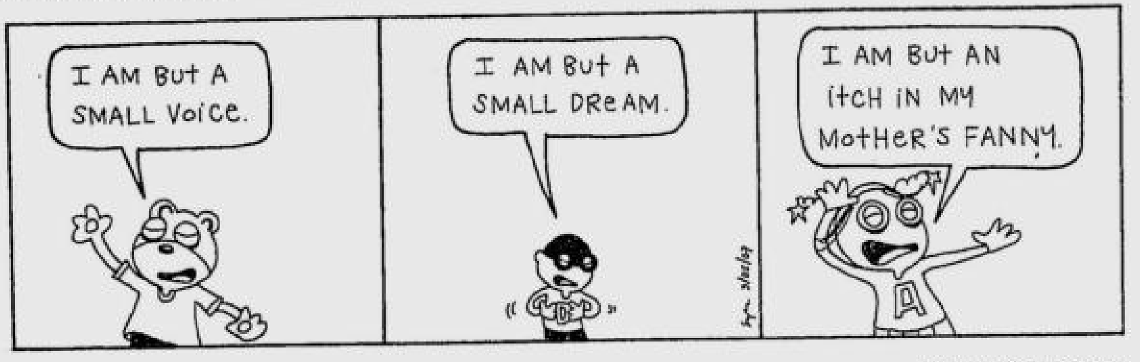
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


WOW!! TINGNAN MO SI MELANIE, JAJA, NAGBABASA ULI NG NEWSPAPER!!!
OO, NGA, ANO?!! KELAN PA?!
NUNG NA-PAGE ONE NA NAMAN SI KRIS, DAHIL MAY PROBLEMA!!!

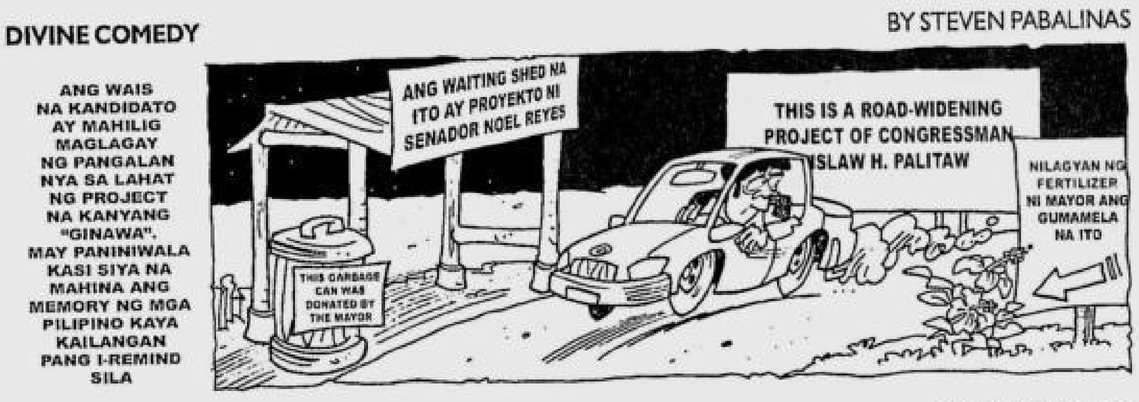
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I AM But A SMALL Voice.
I AM But A SMALL DReAM.
I AM But AN itcH in MY MotHeR's FANNY.

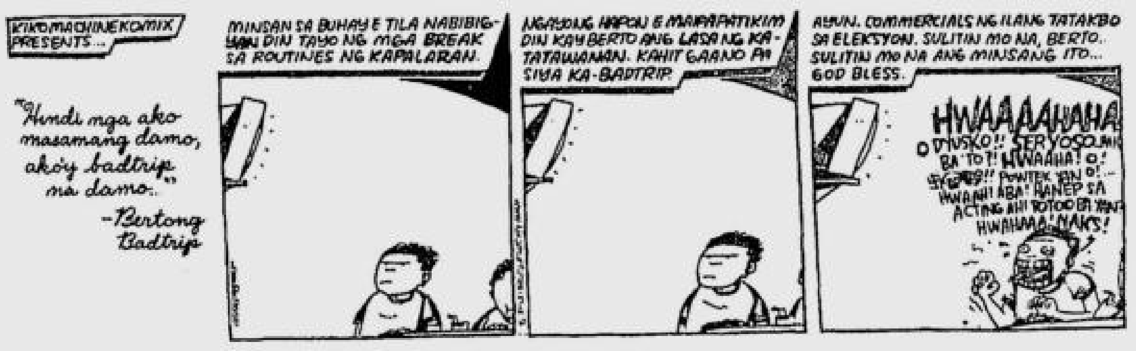
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ANG WAIS NA KANDIDATO AY MAHILIG MAGLAGAY NG PANGALAN NYA SA LAHAT NG PROJECT NA KANYANG "GINAWA". MAY PANINIWALA KASI SIYA NA MAHINA ANG MEMORY NG MGA PILIPINO KAYA KAILANGAN PANG I-REMIND SILA
ANG WAITING SHED NA ITO AY PROYEKTO NI SENADOR NOEL REYES
THIS IS A ROAD-WIDENING PROJECT OF CONGRESSMAN SLAW H. PALITAW
NILAGYAN NG FERTILIZER NI MAYOR ANG GUMAMELA NA ITO
THIS GARBAGE CAN WAS DONATED BY THE MAYOR

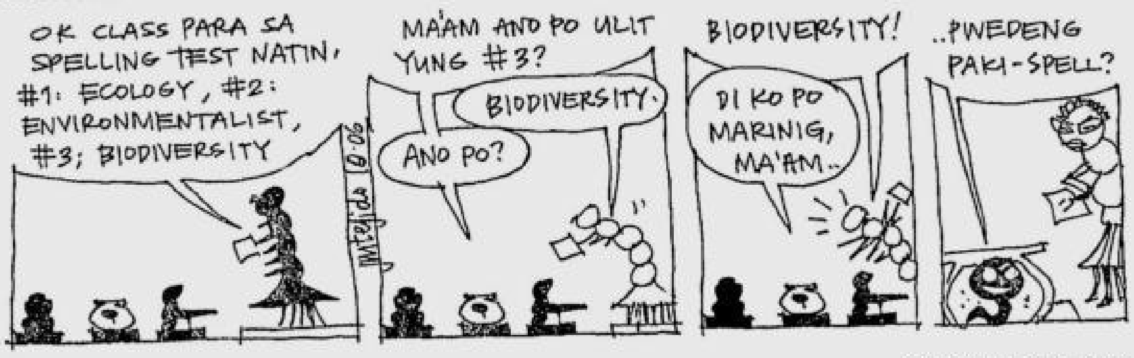
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


KIKOMACHINEKOMIX PRESENTS...
"Hindi nga ako masamang damo, ako'y badtrip na damo." -Bertong Badtrip
MINSAN SA BUHAY E TILA NABIBIG-YAN DIN TAYO NG MGA BREAK SA ROUTINES NG KAPALARAN.
NGAYONG HAPON E MARARATIKIM DIN KAY BERTO ANG LASA NG KA-TATAWANAN. KAHIT GAANO PA SIYA KA-BADTRIP.
AYUN. COMMERCIALS NG ILANG TATAKBO SA ELEKSYON. SULITIN MO NA, BERTO. SULITIN MO NA ANG MINSANG ITO... GOD BLESS.
HWAAAAHAHA
O DIYSKO!! SERYOSO BA 'TO?! HWAAHA! O! SYEMS!! POWTEK YAN O!-HWAAH! ABA! HANEP SA ACTING AH! TOTOO BA YAN? HWAHAHA! NAKS!

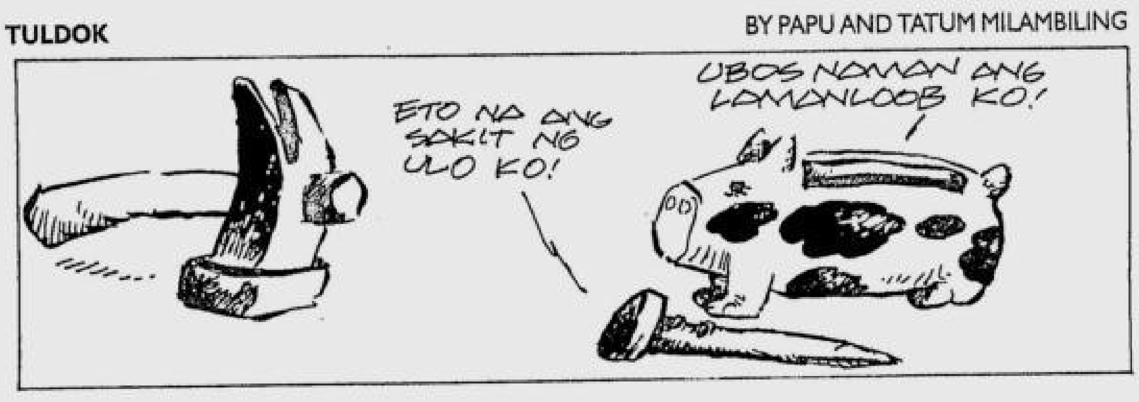
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


OK CLASS PARA SA SPELLING TEST NATIN, #1: ECOLOGY, #2: ENVIRONMENTALIST, #3; BIODIVERSITY
MA'AM ANO PO ULIT YUNG #3?
BIODIVERSITY.
ANO PO?
BIODIVERSITY!
DI KO PO MARINIG, MA'AM..
..PWEDENG PAKI-SPELL?

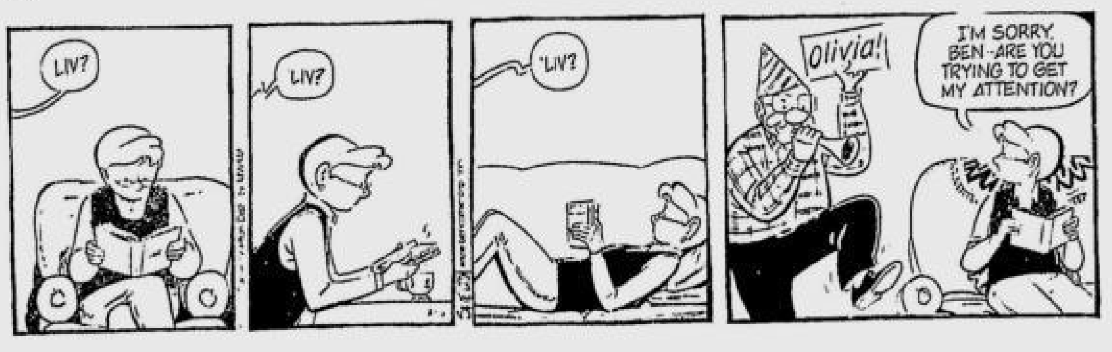
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

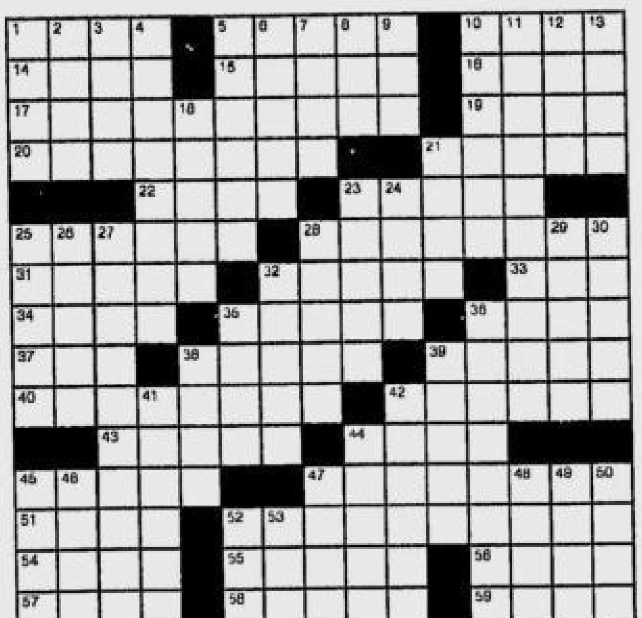

ETO NA ANG SAKIT NG ULO KO!
UBOS NAMAN ANG LAMANLOOB KO!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


LIV?
LIV?
'LIV?
Olivia!
I'M SORRY, BEN - ARE YOU TRYING TO GET MY ATTENTION?

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL
3/5/07

ACROSS
1 Elisabeth of "Leaving Las Vegas"
5 Drive away
10 Related
14 Simple
15 Avoid by deceit
16 Love of tennis
17 Betty MacDonald bestseller
19 All fired up
20 Bothering
21 Total delight
22 Bad actors
23 Make oneself sleek
25 Chafe
28 Like rules made to be broken?
31 Semiconductor
32 On the fritz
33 Wiedersehen lead-in
34 At rest
35 Fish cut
36 750 in letters
37 Sniggler's prey
38 Bad smelling
39 Arrowsmith's first wife
40 Involuntary
42 Trumpet's cousin
43 False gods
44 Backside
45 Student, of sorts
47 Liqueurs
51 Turkish VIP
52 Horse of the Year, 1938
54 Narrow opening
55 Preminger and Kruger
56 Leg joint
57 Location
58 Esthetic judgment
59 Render speechless

DOWN
1 Adam's third
2 Sunken fence
3 Employs
4 Visor
5 Current government
6 Cowgirl Dale
7 Twinge
8 Byrnes of "77 Sunset Strip"
9 Hilo garland
10 Showy shrub
11 "Apollo 13" co-star
12 Writer Murdoch
13 Silent assents
18 Forest clearing
21 Encircling route
23 Like church organs
24 Decisive defeat
25 French farewell
26 Delaware senator
27 Steve Winwood hit of 1988
28 Legally sound
29 Filthy money?
30 Key of "Eroica"
32 Flying toys
35 Tumbled
36 Oil well structures
38 Small ice field
39 Oodles and gobs
41 Conceive mentally
42 Cherry red
44 Mechanical man
45 Sov. news agcy.
46 Citrus hybrid
47 Long-running Webber play
48 Cousin's mother
49 Stead
50 Anna of "Nana"
52 Drunkard
53 Greek letter

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

A	B	O	D	E	■	H	I	R	A	M	■	P	G	A
B	I	C	E	N	T	E	N	A	R	Y	■	E	A	P
C	O	A	S	T	R	A	N	G	E	S	■	R	I	N
■	■	■	M	R	E	D	■	A	N	T	O	I	N	E
O	P	T	O	U	T	O	F	■	A	I	R	S	E	A
G	L	E	N	S	■	F	L	A	■	C	A	T	S	■
H	A	N	D	T	O	H	A	N	D	■	L	A	V	A
A	Y	N	■	S	P	A	T	T	E	R	■	L	I	B
M	I	E	S	■	P	I	T	I	L	E	S	S	L	Y
■	T	S	P	S	■	R	E	S	■	C	O	I	L	S
A	B	S	C	A	M	■	R	E	P	R	I	S	E	S
D	Y	E	A	B	L	E	■	P	R	O	G	■	■	■
D	E	A	■	I	L	L	U	S	I	O	N	I	S	M
L	A	N	■	N	E	L	L	I	E	M	E	L	B	A
E	R	S	■	A	S	S	E	S	■	S	E	L	A	H

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3/5/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have amazing discipline. You will isolate yourself in order to achieve your goals. Many of you choose to work alone because you feel more productive this way. Nevertheless, intimacy is important; you don't squander your time. In the year ahead, you will apply your particular skills to study and learn something valuable for the future.

Birthdate of: James Sikking, actor; Antonio Vivaldi, composer; Sir Rex Harrison, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel restless today. You want something new and exciting to happen. (Or maybe this is what you're afraid will happen?) You want to break free from some kind of restriction.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Expect to be surprised by a friend today. Alternatively, you could meet a new contact who is totally bizarre or quite different from you in some way.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel highly independent today. You don't want anyone telling you what to do. You feel especially rebellious with bosses, parents, authority figures and even the police.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Exciting, new, fresh ideas could blow you out of the water today. Unexpected opportunities to travel, as well as sudden chances to expand your education, might also occur. Act quickly.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Surprise gifts and goodies could come your way today. Possibly, these goodies will come to you indirectly through a partner. Either way, you win.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You feel very independent in all your relationships today. You don't want to be hemmed in by anyone. That's why you're doing a soft-shoe shuffle—now you see me; now you don't.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Interruptions to your daily routine at work are inevitable today. Computer breakdowns, power outages, canceled appointments—something will change things.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Parents must be extra vigilant with children today, because this is an accident-prone day for them. Others might be thrilled with new, surprising flirtations.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Unexpected company might drop by today. Or expected company might be a no-show. Either way, things are a bit topsy-turvy at home today. (Stock the fridge.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a mildly accident-prone day for you—be careful. Slow down; take your time doing things. Don't mouth off to people or jump to conclusions. Watch out for knee-jerk reactions.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might find money today; you might lose money. Something to do with your possessions and your financial transactions is quite unpredictable right now. Keep an eye on things. Check your bank account.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You feel feisty, independent and maybe rebellious today. You want to call the shots. You won't be bossed around!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

5	7				2			
2			9			7	4	
			5	1			8	
	9	2	3					7
		4		6		8		
7					1	9	3	
	4			3	6			
	2	5			8			3
			4				2	9

Difficulty Level ★

3/05

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	9	3	4	7	1	8	5	6
7	1	8	5	3	6	9	2	4
4	5	6	8	9	2	7	1	3
9	8	5	6	2	3	4	7	1
1	6	4	7	8	5	3	9	2
3	2	7	9	1	4	5	6	8
5	7	2	1	4	8	6	3	9
8	3	9	2	6	7	1	4	5
6	4	1	3	5	9	2	8	7

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

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glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729.7777

THX

G1	GLORIETTA 1	1 NUMBER 23	2 PRIMEVAL	3 BRIDGE OF TERABITHIA	4 YOU GOT ME			
G4	GLORIETTA 4	1 FLUSHED AWAY	2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	3 THX PRIMEVAL GUARANTEED SEATS	4 LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA	5 THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND	6 YOU GOT ME	7 EPIC MOVIE
GB1	GREENBELT 1	1 PRIMEVAL	2 YOU GOT ME					
GB3	GREENBELT 3	1 THX LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX MUSIC & LYRICS GUARANTEED SEATS	3 GHOST RIDER GUARANTEED SEATS	4 FLUSHED AWAY GUARANTEED SEATS	5 YOU GOT ME GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX YOU GOT ME GUARANTEED SEATS	2 PRIMEVAL	3 FLUSHED AWAY	4 MUSIC & LYRICS	5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING		
ACC	AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 YOU GOT ME	2 PRIMEVAL	3 FLUSHED AWAY	4 THE FOUNTAIN			
M2	MARKET! MARKET!	1 YOU GOT ME	2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	3 GHOST RIDER	4 PRIMEVAL	5 FLUSHED AWAY		

At the Activity Center

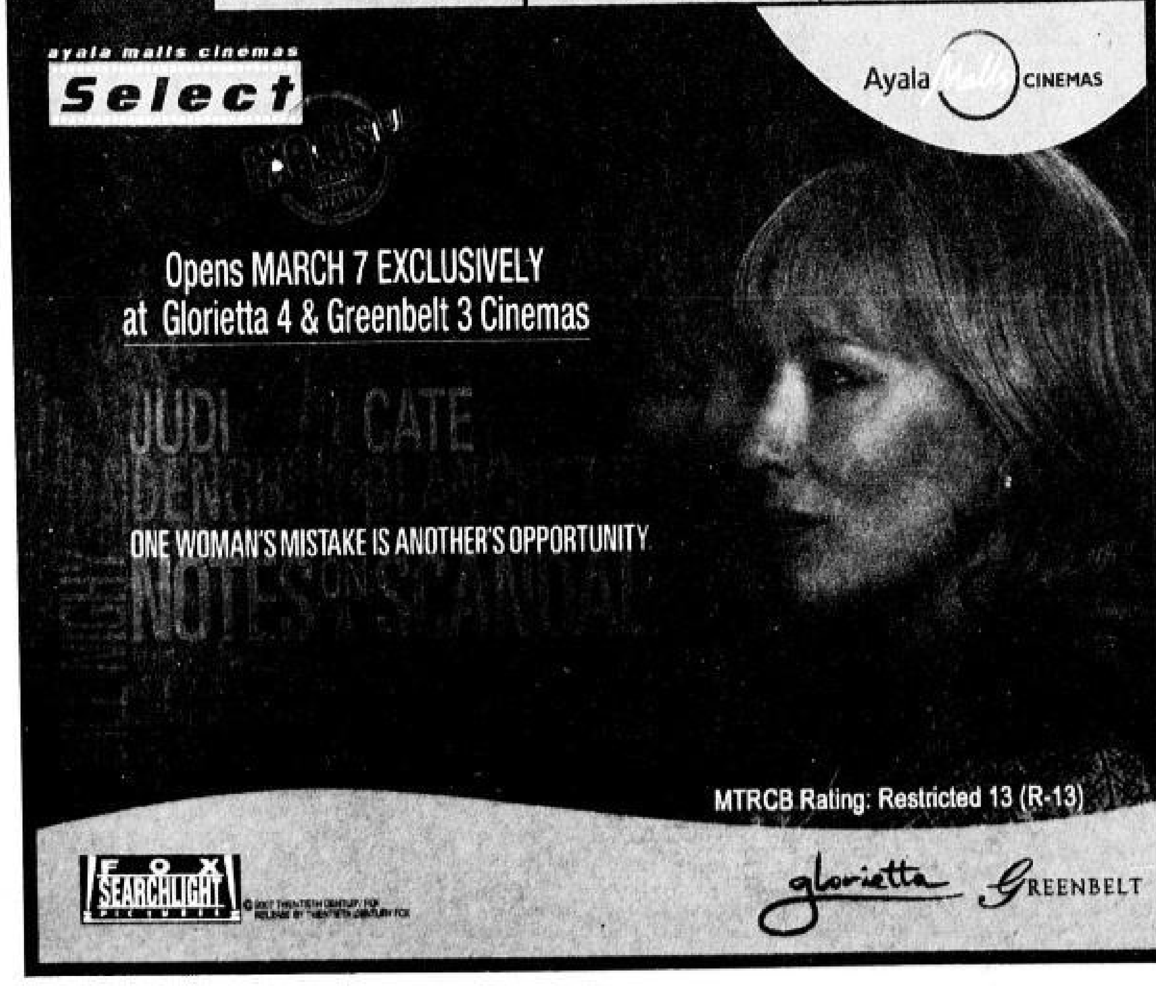
Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm
Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
BPI Express Credit Installment Madness February 28 to March 18, 2007	Anson's Exhibit March 5 to 23, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
USC College of Architecture & Fine Arts Annual Design Awards March 5, 2007	Looney Tunes presents Lights, Camera... Showtime! March 9 to 11, 2007

GREENBELT — Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peek presents Collection of Lila Almario
March 7 to 18, 2007

Greenbelt Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents GAY BIRDS
at REP's Globe Theater - March 16 to April 1, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

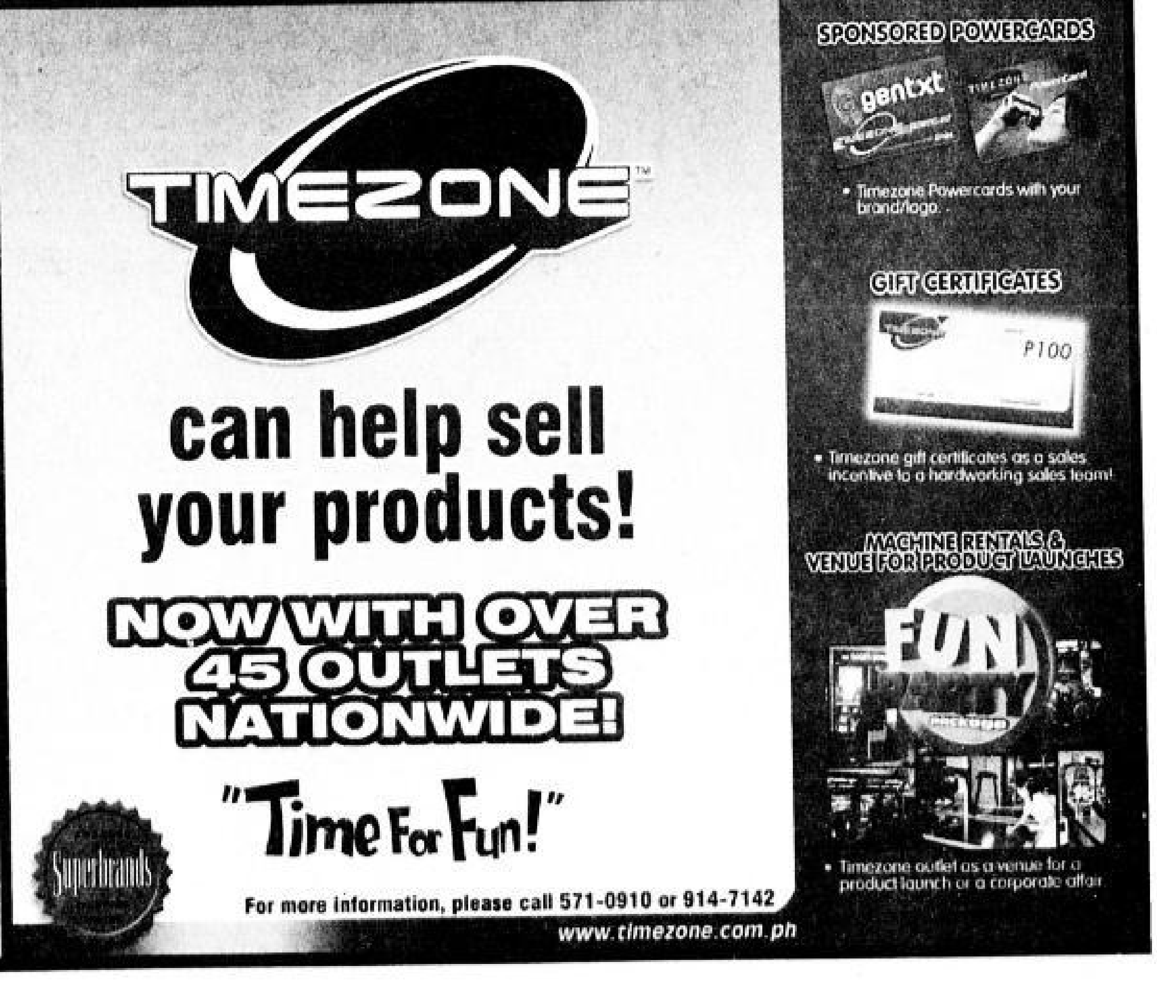
Ayala MUSEUM — CHINESE DIASPORA: Art Streams from the Mainland (six shows)
February 15 to March 27, 2007
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org


ayala malls cinemas
Select
Ayala Malls CINEMAS
JUDI DENCH CATE BLANCHETT
NOTES ON A SCANDAL
FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES
glorietta GREENBELT

Opens MARCH 7 EXCLUSIVELY
at Glorietta 4 & Greenbelt 3 Cinemas

ONE WOMAN'S MISTAKE IS ANOTHER'S OPPORTUNITY

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)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